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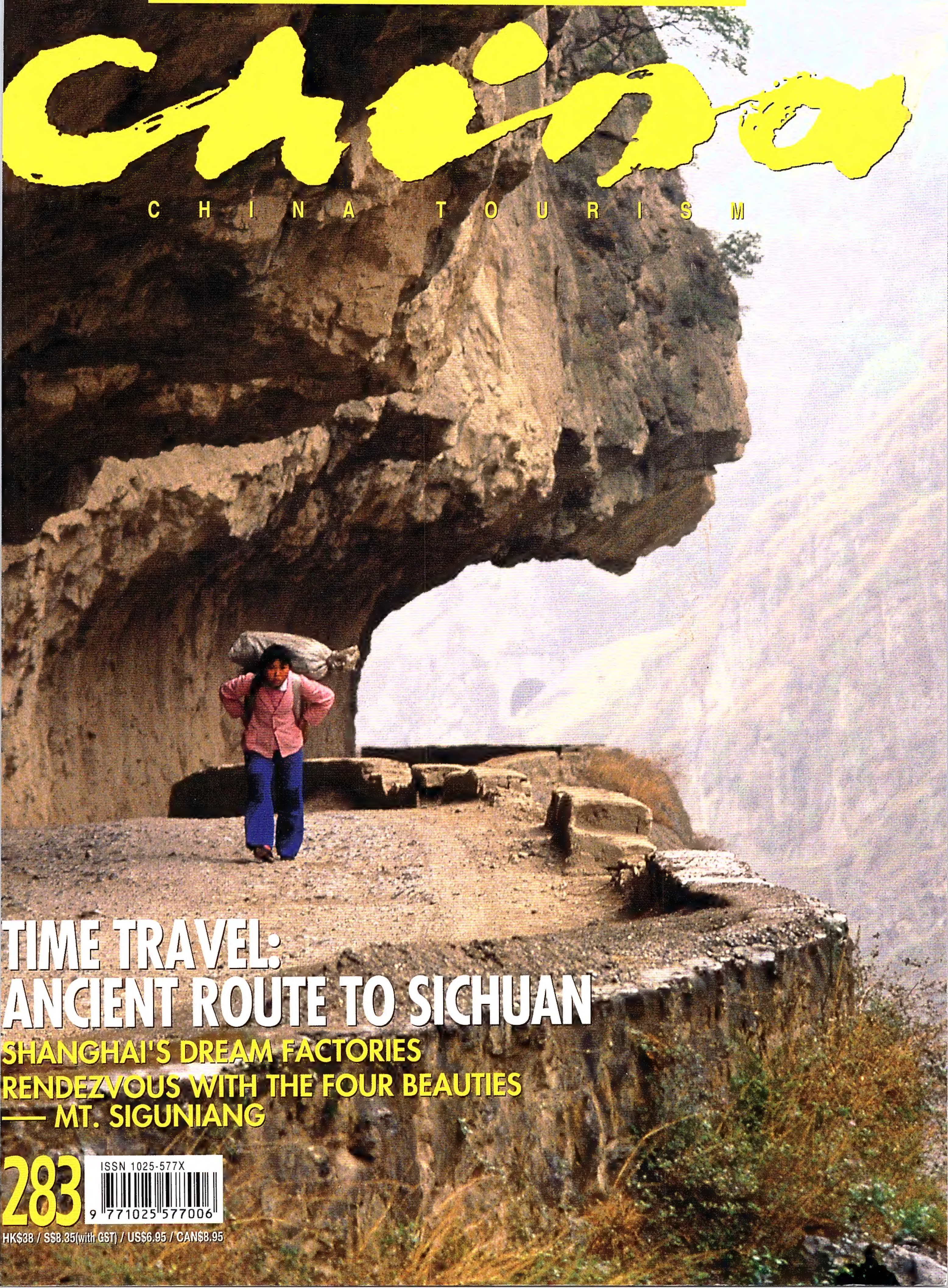

TIME TRAVEL: ANCIENT ROUTE TO SICHUAN

SHANGHAI'S DREAM FACTORIES

RENDEZVOUS WITH THE FOUR BEAUTIES
— MT. SIGUNIANG

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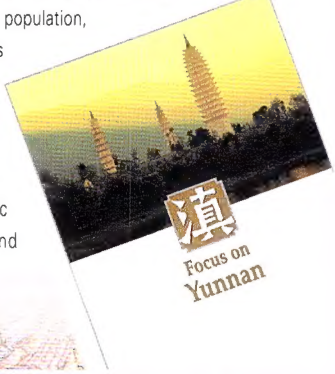
Focus on Yunnan

The mountainous wonderland of Yunnan enjoys a favourable warm climate year round. Its capital, Kunming, sitting alongside Yunnan's largest lake, Dianchi, has the honourable name of "Spring City". The province is full of natural wonders and cultural relics, such as the Stone Forests, the Shangri-La, and the ancient cities of Dali and Lijiang. With over 20 diverse ethnic groups making up about one-third of the population, opportunities abound for you to see their characteristic cultures and customs.



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Focus on Fujian

Situated on the southeast coast, Fujian Province overlooks Taiwan Island across the Taiwan Strait. Its mountainous landscape includes the Wuyi Mountain Scenic Area, one of the UN World Heritage sites in China. The province's zigzag coastlines, numerous beaches and charming seas offer spectacular scenic beauty as well as historical and cultural interest in such places as the Drumming Wave Islet in Xiamen and the Mazu Temple in Meizhou Island.

閩
Focus on
Fujian

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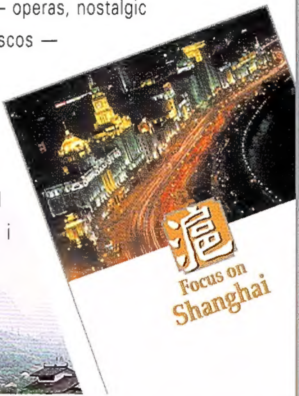
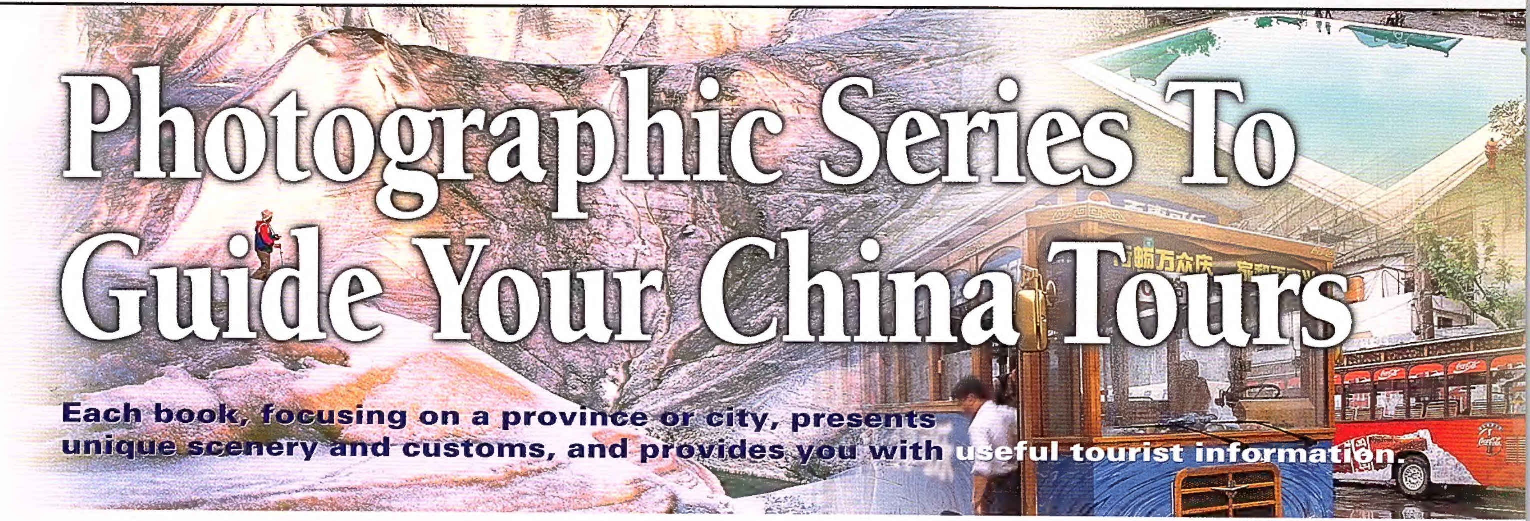
Focus on Shanghai

Shanghai, the largest metropolis in China, and formerly the Far East financial centre, has experienced dramatic development over the past century. The world-famous Bund along the Huangpu River shows you buildings of different historical periods and varied architectural styles, while skyscrapers are rising in the new area of Pudong. Shanghai's multiculturism is seen in its music — operas, nostalgic jazz and discos — and in the busy commercial district of Nanjing and Huaihai roads.





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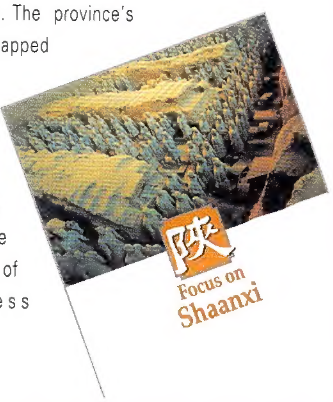
Focus on Shaanxi

Shaanxi is the cradle of the Chinese civilisation and Xi'an was the capital of 13 dynasties. This has left Shaanxi a rich legacy of historical sites and cultural relics. In the provincial capital Xi'an, there is the fascinating terracotta army unearthed from the tomb of the First Emperor, Qin Shihuang; the tomb of Tang-dynasty Wu Zetian, China's first empress; and the stele forest. The province's beauty is capped with the sheer cliffs of Mount Huashan and the yellow earth of the Loess Plateau.



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Focus on Guangdong

An important gateway into China, the fertile Pearl River Delta of the southern province of Guangdong fans out from Guangzhou to the South China Sea and borders Hong Kong and Macao. The province's natural scenic spots include the limestone pinnacles of Zhaoqing's Seven Star Crags, the red sandstone of Danxia Mountain, and the volcanic beauty of Xiqiao Mountain. The capital, Guangzhou, offers plenty of history in its museums, temples, mosques and old colonial buildings.

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Focus on Guizhou

Guizhou is a land of splendid natural scenery. Its towering mountains and karst landforms team up with the gurgling rivers and magnificent waterfalls to form a wonderful work of Mother Nature. Huangguoshu Waterfalls and the limestone caves are the province's most frequented scenic spots. The 17 ethnic groups living in the picturesque province further colour the land with vivid customs and joyous festivals.

It is its natural beauty and culture that make Guizhou a perfect travel destination.

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Guizhou

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Focus on Tianjin

Tianjin, one of the four municipalities under direct Central Government administration, is an important industrial and commercial centre of China and the biggest port in the north. The history of the city can be found in its Ancient Culture Street, 100-year-old Western-style buildings, Opera Museum and Mazu Temple. Besides the TV Tower and the Haihe River in the city, there are scenic spots in the outskirts, including the Dule Temple and the Great Wall at Huangya Pass.

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Focus on Xinjiang

On the vast land of Xinjiang in Northwest China, there are mountains, basins, deserts and lakes, which provide tourists with numerous attractions — ruins of ancient cities and tombs along the Silk Road; Turpan, an oasis in the desert; Kanas Lake, a gem imbedded in the Altay Mountains; Bayanbulak — the Swan Lake; and the world's second largest desert, the Taklimakan. The minority ethnic groups living in Xinjiang, such as the Uygur, Kazak, Mongolian, Uzbek, Tajik, Xibe, Kirgiz and Tatar, all have their own unique colourful culture.

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Focus on
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Focus on Beijing

Beijing is a metropolis of everlasting charm. There are simply too many captivating things to see, to experience and to taste in this grand city with both old glamour and new mobility. There are historical sites such as the Palace Museum (the Forbidden City), the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace, and the Ming Tombs; there are also many scenic spots in its outskirts. Recently, tours have been organised for visitors to taste the real Beijing flavour of life — touring the small back lanes, having tea in a traditional-style teahouse and enjoying the Peking Opera.

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Beijing

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Focus on Shanxi

Shanxi Province, one of the birthplaces of the Chinese civilisation, has impressive ancient architecture and a wealth of well-preserved Buddhist temples, monasteries and grottoes. Among the most famous are the Yungang Grottoes containing some of China's oldest sculptures and Buddhist art, the Yongle Palace, the Jinci Temple, the Hanging Monastery built on a sheer cliff and the Wutai Mountain, one of China's most famous sacred Buddhist lands.

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Focus on
Shanxi

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Focus on Guangxi

Unusual topography has endowed the province with numerous spectacular karst formations — limestone caves, pinnacles and rocks. The most famous and enchanting scenic spot is Guilin, and the most travelled route, on the Lijiang River from Guilin to Yangshuo. The coastal city of Beihai has the country's largest beach, the Silver Beach. Other attractions include the varied traditional customs of ethnic minorities, the Sino-Vietnamese border area, and the mysterious Huashan cliff paintings.

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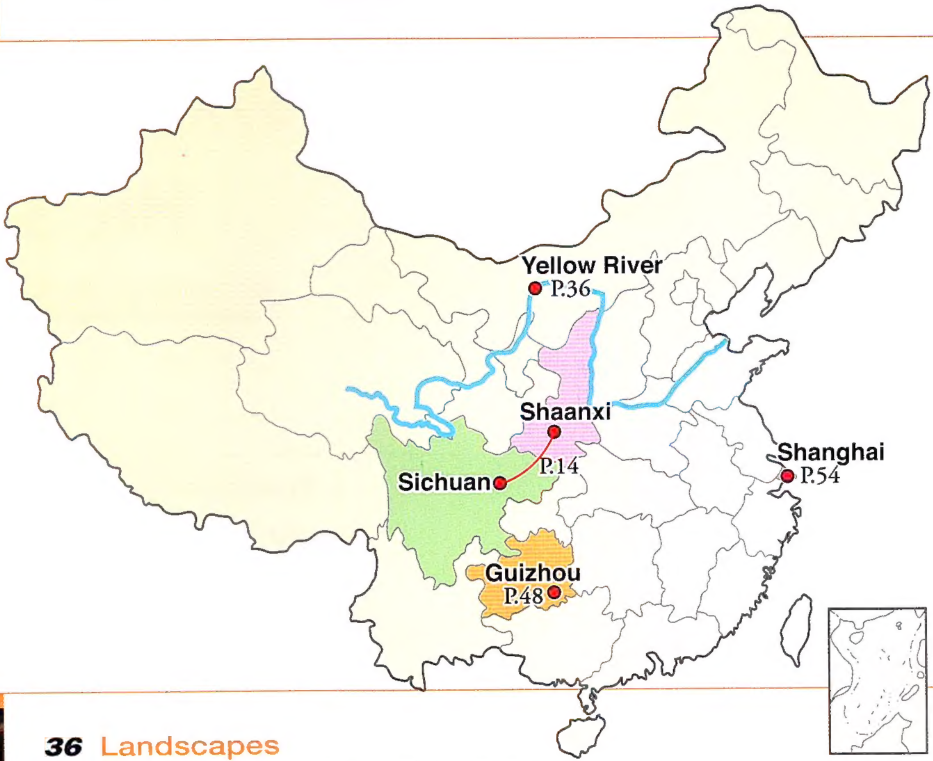
Time Travel Adventure — The Ancient Route to Sichuan

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Hu Jun, Hu Cheng, Shi Baoxiu

Travelling road to Sichuan is a journey back through time. The oldest national road was permeated with gunpowder fumes from time to time, and it also bore the tread of a myriad of influential figures in many dynasties.

China
CHINA TOURISM
No. 283 Feb/Mar 2004



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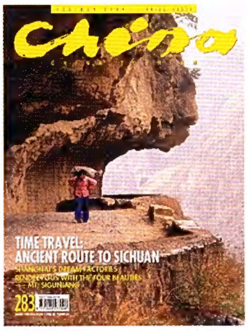
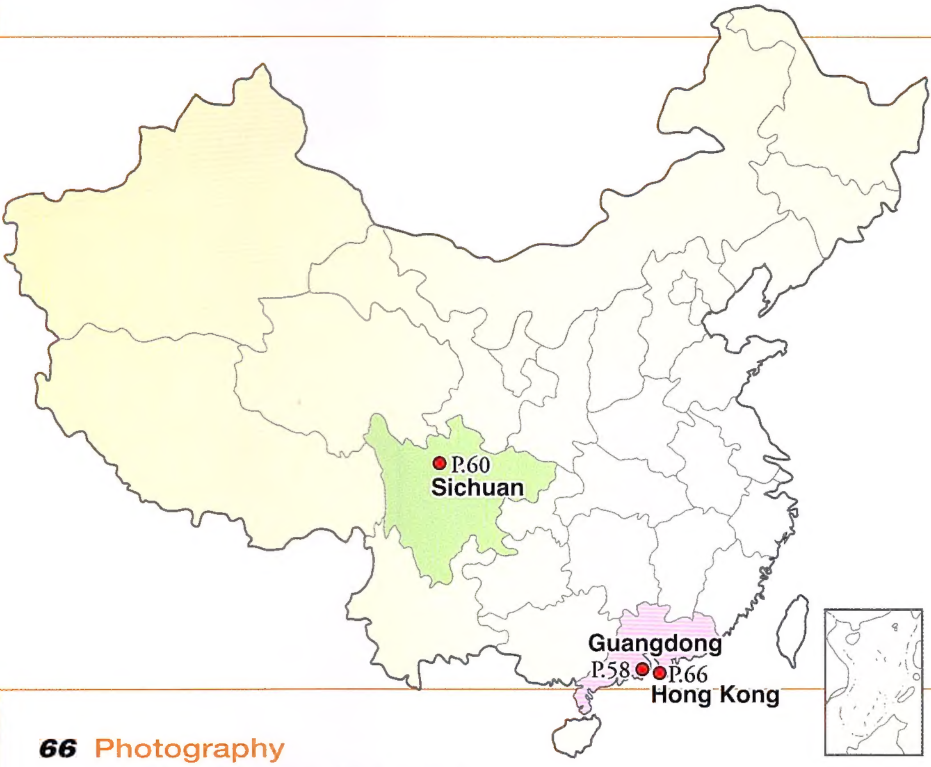
A Close Encounter with Mt. Siguniang

Photos & Article by Hua Nian

God created countless peaks and summits in Sichuan, and the most striking one of all is the Mt. Siguniang (Four Beauties). The original Tibetan name of Mt. Siguniang means abode of the mountain god. Legend has it that the four connecting peaks were shaped by four pure and innocent maidens, hence the charming name.



Ancient Route to Sichuan Province
(by Hu Wugong)



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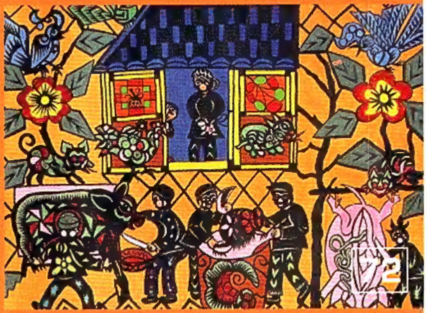
Dive into the Deep Blue World

Photos by Stephen Wong & Takako Uno *Article by Stephen Wong*

Despite the hitherto environmental assaults on our ocean, the manipulation of the precious water resources seems never-ending. How long can our once magnificent oceans last?



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Popular Folk Arts and Crafts

The will to pursue beauty transcends all economic and social circumstances. In fact, the most interesting and creative arts are often found in the rural areas.

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Editorial Dept., Business Dept., Advertising Dept., Sales Dept. Tel: (852) 2561 8001
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FROM THE EDITOR

Time Travel

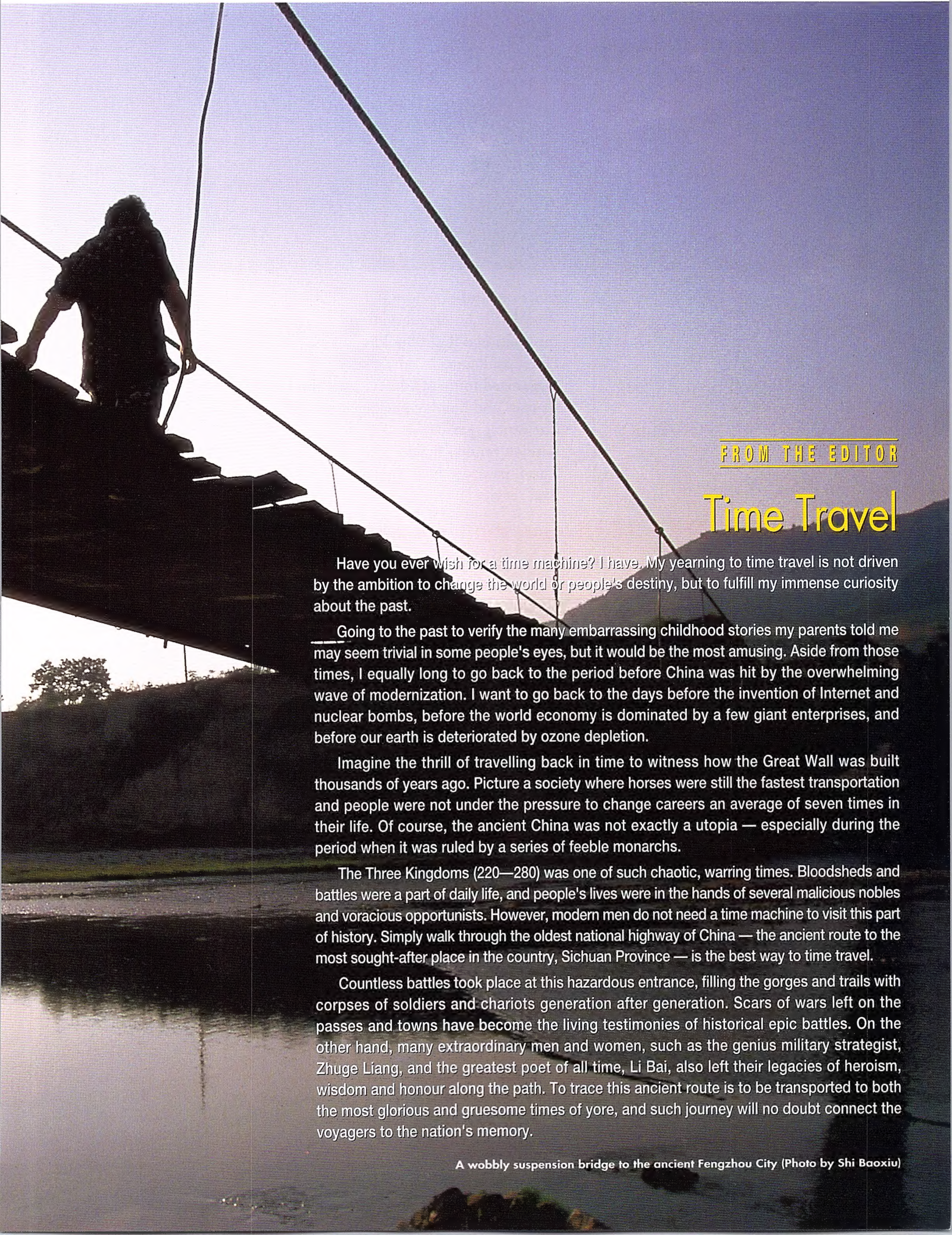
Have you ever wish for a time machine? I have. My yearning to time travel is not driven by the ambition to change the world or people's destiny, but to fulfill my immense curiosity about the past.

Going to the past to verify the many embarrassing childhood stories my parents told me may seem trivial in some people's eyes, but it would be the most amusing. Aside from those times, I equally long to go back to the period before China was hit by the overwhelming wave of modernization. I want to go back to the days before the invention of Internet and nuclear bombs, before the world economy is dominated by a few giant enterprises, and before our earth is deteriorated by ozone depletion.

Imagine the thrill of travelling back in time to witness how the Great Wall was built thousands of years ago. Picture a society where horses were still the fastest transportation and people were not under the pressure to change careers an average of seven times in their life. Of course, the ancient China was not exactly a utopia — especially during the period when it was ruled by a series of feeble monarchs.

The Three Kingdoms (220—280) was one of such chaotic, warring times. Bloodsheds and battles were a part of daily life, and people's lives were in the hands of several malicious nobles and voracious opportunists. However, modern men do not need a time machine to visit this part of history. Simply walk through the oldest national highway of China — the ancient route to the most sought-after place in the country, Sichuan Province — is the best way to time travel.

Countless battles took place at this hazardous entrance, filling the gorges and trails with corpses of soldiers and chariots generation after generation. Scars of wars left on the passes and towns have become the living testimonies of historical epic battles. On the other hand, many extraordinary men and women, such as the genius military strategist, Zhuge Liang, and the greatest poet of all time, Li Bai, also left their legacies of heroism, wisdom and honour along the path. To trace this ancient route is to be transported to both the most glorious and gruesome times of yore, and such journey will no doubt connect the voyagers to the nation's memory.



A wobbly suspension bridge to the ancient Fengzhou City (Photo by Shi Baoxiu)

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Mar 6

Lhasa, Tibet Autonomy Region

The **Butter Lamp Festival**, Chunga Choepa in Tibetan, was to celebrate the victory of Sakyamuni (a Buddhist-Lamaist God) against heretics in a religious debate. Various giant sculptures made of butter and tsampa (roasted barley flour), in forms of auspicious symbols and figures, are displayed on Barkhor – an oldest circular street at the center of Old Lhasa, where Tibetan culture, economy, religion and arts assemble. People would sing and dance throughout the festive night.

http://www.travelchinaguide.com/cityguides/tibet/festival.htm

Jan 1 — February 28

Ciqikou, Chongqing Municipal City

The **Sand Sculpture Festival** is held at a thousand-year old town in southwest of Ciqikou. Over 100 examples of sand arts by experts from the United States, Japan, South Korea, India, and Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao will be on display on a 300,000 m^2 area along the Jialing River. In addition, the Third Ciqikou Temple Fair featuring a rally competition, fashion show, snack sale, and a local products exhibition and sale, is being on display at the same time.

http://www.china.org.cn/english/travel/83405.htm

Early February — Early March

Zigong, Sichuan Province

This **Zigong Lantern Show** during the Spring Festival is no ordinary carnival. The lanterns, which as a rule are marked by superb craftsmanship, are woven of thin bamboo strips and covered with colourful silk fabrics or paper, they are grouped into several hundred clusters to form a spectacular show of forms, colours light, movements and sounds. Another highlight of the festival is the local art made with ordinary material. For instance, a "dragon" that pieced together with porcelain dinner-sets, and a "peacock" fashioned out of glass drug bottles strung together are to display along with thousands of lanterns.

http://www.chn-zg-lantern.org/english/dhjs/

till Mar 2

Shatin, Hong Kong

The **18th Asia International Art Exhibition** features over 170 works by artists from various Asian countries and cities, including Japan, Korea, China, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Macao and Hong Kong. It gives a comprehensive overview of the development of art in the Asia Pacific region and at the same time explore Asian ways of life and culture as expressed through the visual arts. The theme of this exhibition "Mapping Asia" is aimed to map out the different Asian regions within the global context and hopes to shed some light on what could be called the individualistic expression of "glocalization" in art. Want to find out how Asians contribute to the world's cultural heritage and envisage themselves as global citizens? Don't miss this exhibition at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum!

http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200311/20/1120129.htm

March 5 — 14

Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

HK Flower Show 2004 names its theme "Pansy fantasia". The event at Victoria Park will showcase this exquisite plant and other exotic flowers, landscape and floral art displays by more than 100 organisations from local, the Mainland and overseas. There will also be some 50 commercial stalls selling flowers and other horticultural products.

http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/LEISURE/LP/gc/hkfs/hkfs2004/en/index.html

Feb 3 — Mar 7

Hong Kong

The **Hong Kong Arts Festival** is a major international arts festival that features overseas and local artists of renown in an eclectic array of music, theatre, dance, popular entertainment, film and exhibition programmes. The best Asian and local talents are showcased alongside top artists from elsewhere around the world. It has a broad spectrum of programmes, ranging from classical fare to new age art forms.

www.hk.artsfestival.org

Wild Camels Bothered by Mining

The growing mining industry in Lop Nur, a dried out ancient lake in China's far western Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, is causing problems for wild camels inhabiting the area.

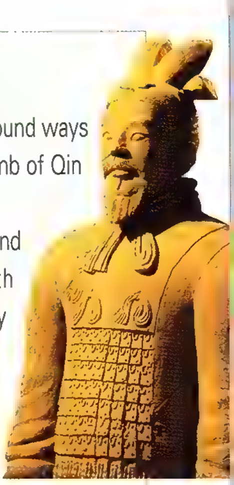
Lop Nur, on the eastern edge of China's desert Tarim Basin, in southeast Xinjiang, used to be a huge lake of over 10,000 km^2, but dried up in 1972.

The nation set up a 78,000-km^2 reserve for some 500 wild camels living in the Lop Nur area. Rich mineral resources, including coal, potassium salt, and iron and copper core, are also found in this area. This has led to the establishment of 14 mining sites in the reserve area, according to Zhang Yongshan, director of the reserve's administration office.

Some sites occupy water sources essential for the camels, and some fail to process garbage in accordance with environmental protection standards, Zhang said. The transportation of mining products also severely affects their living and breeding habits, posing big threats to wild camels.

The situation may turn for the better as China pledges to strive for simultaneous development in mineral resources exploitation and environmental protection and pollution control. The government will see relevant laws and regulations be implemented to the letter and violators be punished according to law.

Protecting Terra-cotta Warriors



Chinese researchers said recently that they had found ways to preserve color of the terra-cotta warriors in the tomb of Qin Shihuang, the first emperor who unified China.

Dubbed one of the eight wonders in the world, and the most splendid archeological find of the 20th century, the Qin Shihuang tomb was accidentally discovered in 1974 by local farmers while they were digging a well.

Nearly 8,000 life-sized terra-cotta warriors and horses along with tens of thousands of pieces of weaponry have been uncovered from three pits, where the terra-cotta warriors and horses have slept for almost 2,200 years.

For various reasons, most of the warriors and horses, colorfully painted at the time they were created, had lost their vivid colors when they were unearthed from the tomb.

Researchers said that the lacquer on the terra-cotta warriors is highly sensitive to temperature changes, and the warriors suffered further from mildew and drying out when they were excavated from the damp earth, causing lacquer to shrink.

Over 20 different reinforcing agents and 19 shrink-resistant materials have been tried and scientists have come up with a liquid mixture of polyurethane to protect the lacquer.

Using an advanced technology for stabilizing the lacquer layer, several warriors painted in dark red or green were found to have remained in stable condition for many years.

But today, the scientists are still faced with growing problems in keeping the soldiers' youthful looks, and they have been forced to scale back excavations.

Other problems threatening the warriors include ground water and the risk of earthquakes in an area that has already seen numerous large tremors in the past.

Public Help Beijing Police to Stop Pickpocketing

Hiding purses and mobile phones in lunch pails was one of 163 suggestions from the general public on how to combat pickpocketing sent to the Beijing police over a mere five days.

In mid-December last year, the Beijing police launched a public drive to invite people to suggest how to prevent themselves being stolen on public buses.

A 74-year-old man, sent in a three-page letter to introduce three types of pickpocket and couple tips on how to guard against them. Another man of southern Shenzhen City, championed all the suggestion givers by offering 25 measures in a single e-mail. He illustrated in details to show how to tailor special pockets that make pickpocketing difficult.

An overseas Chinese residing in Australia introduced the measures people in Australia take.

A man who works in the IT industry, suggested that the police should open a hotline service for people to send in reports on pickpocketing cases, which the police agreed is a convenient, fast and safe method for passengers to call the police for help.

The police said pickpocketing is common on buses, as Beijing's public transportation is expanding quickly to meet the rapid rate of urbanization.

Porcelain Patent Pirates Pay Piper

Known as China's porcelain capital for its marvelous craftsmanship, Jingdezhen city is taking companies to court to safeguard its reputation and to protect its patents.

"It is undoubtedly a life-or-death war for Jingdezhen to revive its glory against patent infringement," said Hong Kemin, presiding judge over intellectual property rights at the Jingdezhen City Intermediate People's Court in eastern Jiangxi Province. "Trademark violations and patent encroachment are the major cause for the decline of the Jingdezhen porcelain industry."

Since its establishment in October 1999, the intellectual property rights court in Jingdezhen has handled 130 cases, helping trademark holders and craftsmen retrieve direct economic losses of some 30 million yuan (US $4 million).

Meanwhile, applications for patents on ceramic products in Jingdezhen have currently to more than 2,000 every year from just 60 before 1999, according to city government statistics.

Increasing awareness of patent and trademark strategy has even led to the registration of "Jingdezhen", the porcelain capital's name, as a trademark by the Jingdezhen Ceramic Association in 1999.

The association sued Shanghai Guorong Investment Company recently for intellectual property rights infringement, saying the company's organization of a ceramic products commodities fair in name of Jingdezhen porcelain early this year in Singapore and Cambodia had damaged its trademark rights.

"This row over the trademark of 'Jingdezhen' is just tip of the iceberg," Hong said. "The concept of intellectual property rights has just begun to be aroused in the city."

State-ownership of Smuggled Relics Restored

Around 9,000 smuggled cultural relics were handed over to the Cultural Heritage Administration of Tianjin, a north China port city, by the General Administration of Customs.

The handover, including nine second-level and 226 third-level state-protected relics, was the biggest one in recent years, said Mou Xinsheng, commissioner of the General Administration of Customs.

Mou said that the General Administration of Customs is now extending close cooperation with relevant departments to establish a long-term system against cultural relics smuggling.

He said that China's customs offices at all levels use the latest technology to form an information network for the management of Chinese cultural relics.

According to customs statistics, since 1995, customs offices at all levels have salvaged 45,725 smuggled cultural relics, of which 4,065 pieces were rescued this year.

World Heritage Grottoes Site Upgraded

North China's Shanxi Province is investing 100 million yuan (US $12 million) to improve infrastructure and environment around the Yungang Grottoes, built more than 1,500 years ago. These Yungang Grottoes were included in the World Heritage list in 2001.

The improvement project consists of three phases: construction and improvement of infrastructure; demolition and removal of unsightly buildings from scenic areas; and tree planting at the scenic site.

The Yungang Grottoes, 16 kilometers west of the city of Datong, were hewn from the cliffs in a honeycomb pattern and stretch for a kilometer from east to west.

Building of the grottoes began around 460 AD in the Northern Wei Dynasty. Within four decades, 1,000 grottoes and 100,000 Buddhist statues were completed together with large numbers of niches and colorful decorations.

The infrastructure construction and improvement project will cover the building of a water purification plant with a capacity of 300 tons of drinking water daily, a sewage treatment plant with a daily capacity of 1,400 tons and power, water and heating supply facilities. The project is expected to be completed at the end of July.

The Yungang Grottoes have been extensively damaged over the centuries. At least 1,400 Buddhist statues were stolen and shipped out of the country.

Thanks to the government's persistent efforts to preserve the grottoes, cracked caves and statues have been reinforced and modern technologies have been used to prevent weathering.

About 51,000 statues remain, the largest at 17 m high and the smallest two centimetres.

Dead Mao Fuels Tourism

Hunan Many local people in Shaoshan, Central China's Hunan Province, Mao's hometown, are beneficiaries of the charisma of the past Communist Chairman Mao Zedong.

Su Miaogong, a native of Shaoshan and director of the Shaoshan Fengyuan Tourism Co Ltd, purchased 40-year operation rights of the martyr cemetery in Shaoshan for about 2 million yuan (US $250,000). Su plans to use the cemetery as a base to develop memorial badges and wax images of Mao and other great world figures. He also plans to build a star-level hotel and other facilities. "It is precisely the charms of Chairman Mao that has helped me to succeed today," said Su.

Tang Ruiren is another beneficiary of those charms. Sixteen years ago, Tang, former neighbour of Chairman Mao, started a restaurant opposite the former residence of Mao. Drawing support from a picture of the great leader with her family and Mao's favourite dish of pork braised in brown sauce, Tang prospered and opened a chain of restaurants in a dozen cities.

Tang's eldest son, Mao Mingjun, is devoted to the preservation of "Shao Music", a traditional music which had sunk into oblivion for ages, will be revived in Shaoshan. The Shao Music Centre has been built in the Mao Zedong Memorial Park.

Now the local government in Shaoshan regards the tourism business as its foundation. "It's from today that the 'Mao economy' is truly taking a real pace to the good of Shaoshan," said Peng Ziyu, mayor of the city.

Sanya and Haikou Top Ten Unpolluted Cities

[illegible] China's cities of Sanya and Haikou, both in south China's island Hainan Province, have been listed among the top ten cities with best air quality in the world.

A UN environmental organization has surveyed nearly 160 key cities worldwide. Sanya is in the second place, while Haikou stays in the 5th place. The other three cities among the top five are Havana in Cuba, Mendoza in Argentina and Tampere in Finland.

Grand Theater Adds Style to China's First Avenue

Beijing If all goes as planned, Beijing's Chang'an Avenue, an area of architectural history spanning 600 years, will herald an unusual egg-shaped French-designed Grand Theater sometime in autumn, further adding to its diversity.

"Driving along the avenue will be even more amazing," said Martin Paske, an American architecture student who has been doing an internship in China for over a year. "In five minutes, you get to see the glorious red-walled imperial Forbidden City, the century-old French-style Beijing Hotel, the solemn Great Hall of the People that can trace a Russian element and clusters of modern North American style plazas."

The 7-km Chang'an Avenue, known as the "First Avenue of China", is the axial line running east to west that cuts through the heart of Beijing, stretching from Fuxingmen to Jianguomen, flanked with at least 50 magnificent buildings.

"Lying behind the architecture is China's increasing acceptance of foreign concepts," said Prof. Dong Guangqi, advisor to the Beijing Municipal Institute of City Planning & Design. "The rapid transformation of city skyline features a kind of cultural documentary of an era."

In the past two decades, as China became more open to the outside, a host of modern architecture has filled both sides of the street. Domestic architects have explored new ways to express their ideas on Chang'an Avenue, producing the Cultural Palace of National Minorities in the north of the avenue. The Oriental Plaza, at the intersection of the business street "Wangfujing" and Chang'an Avenue is a complex with distinctive glassy exterior design.

The design for the National Grand Theater has drawn attention worldwide. 44 entries from 36 designing institutions, including 20 from overseas, participated in the bid.

Beijing residents selected three designs in a five-day public review and passed the result to the evaluating committee composed of professors from top universities and government officials, who finally chose the one designed by French architect Paul Andrew.

Andrew was excited to find that Beijing was "brave enough" to accept his bold modern design. "It reflects a new outward-looking China."

"Elliptical architecture is likely to tone in with its surroundings", with traditional buildings as the Forbidden City built in the 15th century and modern buildings such as the Great Hall of the People, said Andrew.

Fifth Airshow China Scheduled in Nov

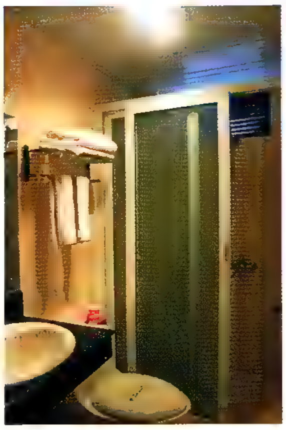
Guangdong Yang Liwei, China's first astronaut, is expected to show up at the Fifth Airshow China that will be held from November 1 to 7, 2004, in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province.

Giant aviation and space companies and institutions like Boeing, European Aeronautic, Defense and Space Company, and aircraft companies from Israel, Brazil and Russia will participate in the fair, according to the organizing committee.

Aviation and space industry associations and exhibition organizers from countries including Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Italy and the United States have indicated their intention to participate in the show.

During the show, the return capsule in which Yang was brought back to earth will be displayed, according to the organizing committee. The first four days of the show will be devoted to business, and the other three days will be set-aside for the public.

Star-level Public Toilets



Liaoning Dalian, a tourist city in northeast China's Liaoning Province, is listening to the complaints of visitors, and establishing a star rating system for its public toilets.

The unusual step was prompted by tourists complaining of the scarcity, poor quality and poor sanitation of public rest rooms, said Gao Qing, director of planning section of the local tourism department.

City managers picked out 85 public rest rooms in tourism spots for the scheme, the first city in China to do so. The rest rooms include two five-stars, 13 four-stars, 44 three-stars and 26 two and one star facilities. Another 15 rest rooms are still waiting for the assessment.

The normally revolting state of public rest rooms is a problem all over China, and a major cause of tourist complaints in a country that is trying to meet Western standards of sanitation, especially in the important tourism industry.

To improve Dalian's image, the local government has asked tourism managers to equip public toilets with flush facilities or ecologically water-free facilities last year. In the next two years, the city will build or rebuild 300 star-level rest rooms or 100 each year.

Currently, most rest rooms in tourist spots do not charge, but after the assessment, star-level facilities will charge a sum ranging from half to one yuan, said Gao. He explained that most of these star-level rest rooms are privately owned.

Air China Opened New Asian Flights

[illegible] Air China plans to open new flights to Asia at the beginning of this year in order to meet growing demand.

On January 9, Air China launched flights from Chongqing via Shanghai to Nagoya. A Boeing 737-800 airplane takes off from Chongqing at 7:30 every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday and reach Nagoya at 13:20. It takes off again at 14:30 from Nagoya and return to Chongqing at 19:00.

Air China also opened flights from Beijing via Xiamen to Jakarta. The Boeing 737-700 airplane takes off at 16:00 every Tuesday and Friday, and arrives in Jakarta at 23:50. The plane takes off from Jakarta at 00:50 every Wednesday and Saturday and return to Beijing at 11:10.

Furthermore, Air China opened flights from Hangzhou to Singapore. An Airbus 319 airplane takes off at 19:30 from Hangzhou every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday and arrive in Singapore at 00:50 the next day. The plane takes off at 7:10 every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday in Singapore and arrives in Hangzhou at 12:10.

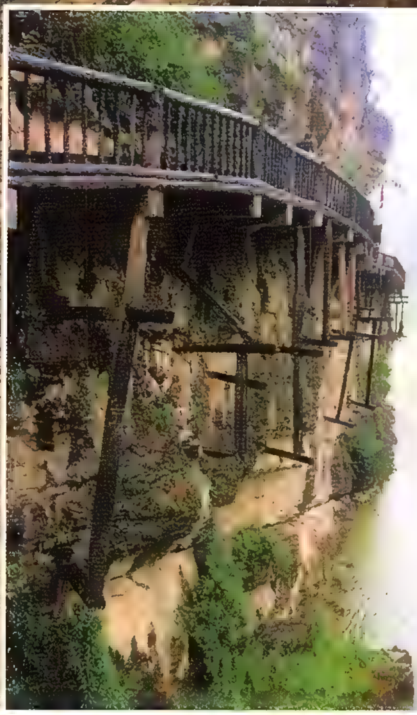
Laissez Faire Air Travel Industry

China China's civil aviation authority will allow competition in the air travel industry and gradually ease controls on airfares.

Yang Yuanyuan, director-general of the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China (CAAC), said it would open air routes to competition as part of reform measures in 2004.

The CAAC has allowed certain discounts but airlines are still not allowed to set airfares themselves. Meanwhile, Yang said market access would be broadened and private investors would be allowed to enter the sector by establishing new enterprises or buying shares in existing companies. Both international and domestic capital would be encouraged to enter China's civil aviation industry.

In the past year, the country's civil aviation industry revenue was 110 billion yuan (US $13 billion), up marginally over the previous year although heavy losses were felt during April and June due to SARS.

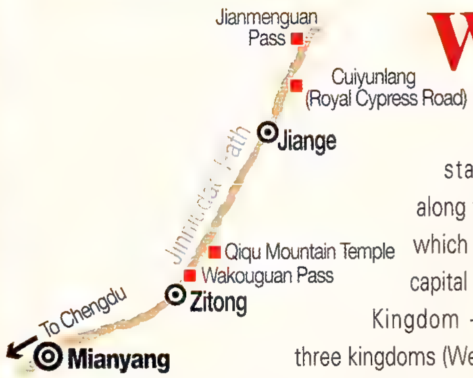


Time Travel Adventure —
Ancient Route to Sichuan

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Hu Jun, Hu Cheng, Shi Baoxiu

Travelling the ancient route to Sichuan is a journey back through time. The oldest national road in China was a busy post road early in the Han (206 BC—220 AD) and Tang (618—907) Dynasties, thronging with people coming and going between Shaanxi and Sichuan Provinces. Permeated with gunpowder fumes from time to time, the road bore the tread of a myriad of influential figures, and was commended by men of letters in many dynasties. Its history comes alive in the many ancient folktales, unique local cultures and customs of Sichuan and Shaanxi areas, and the seemingly endless scenic spots and historic sites....

Wakouguan Pass — *Where the Rough Road Begins*



Wanting to trace the story of the old road, we started our trip along from Chengdu, which used to be the capital of the Shu Han Kingdom — one of the three kingdoms (Wei, Shu and Wu) dating back to the third century. At that time the Chengdu Plain was known as the "Land of Plenty" because it had very abundant natural resources. However, the way to this paradise was daunting. The torrents and dangerous shoals of the Three Gorges on the Yangtze River once blocked the way into Sichuan by water, while a 300-km mountain path was the only land route. That is why it was said that walking on the narrow paths of Sichuan Province was as difficult as ascending to heaven.

Nowadays it takes just an hour or two to fly over all the mountains and rivers. Yet the journey to Sichuan Province by train or bus still takes quite some time, because the natural barriers are still as challenging as ever.

We left Chengdu on the freeway, taking just 20 minutes to motor to Sanxingdui, in Guanghan, where many grotesque and fantastic bronze joss statues have been unearthed. Heading through Deyang, we arrived at Mianyang after 50 minutes, where we left the freeway and got on National Highway 108. Within an hour we reached Zitong. On the edge of the Chengdu Plain, Zitong has gently rolling hills. From here we changed to the special-line coach running from the county seat to Qiqu Mountain Temple. Once out of the town heading north, we were on a road winding through the mountains. Looking out of the window after a couple of turns, I found the river and farmland on the plain had been left far behind.

Arriving at Wakouguan Pass, I looked up to see on the mountain ridge ahead an ancient tower standing among a dense glade of green cypress trees. We entered the tower through the "Water Guanyin" Gate, then went through the Arhat Hall formed like a maze and leading to the outside of the pass. The Gate Tower is not tall, so in less than two minutes we were at the top. Outside the tower, we saw the statue of dark-faced Zhang Fei with his short beard and wide staring eyes — a famous general of the Three Kingdoms Period (220—280) — sitting in the hall facing the undulating mountains to the north.

The ancient path outside Wakouguan Pass is hidden in the old cypress trees. The well-known Jinniudao (Golden Ox) Path to Sichuan starts from the pass in the north. The path cuts through many dangerous and difficult passes along the way, becoming increasingly difficult.

Qiqu Mountain — The Two Temples

It was a surprise to find a resplendent and magnificent temple complex on the path below the Qiqu Mountain outside the Wakouguan Pass. Standing side by side are the Wenchang Temple, or Temple of the God of Literature who was a patron of scholars, and the Temple of General Guan Yu, renowned for his martial valour. We entered the Wenchang Temple, and noticed that the pillars were thick and firm, built with the timber of thousand-year-old cypress trees. It appeared that these cypress trees were from the mountain just outside the temple.

Little wonder the students who passed the college entrance examination sent inscribed boards or embroidered silk banners to the temple to redeem their vows. There were many worshippers in the temple, most of whom were college students, or even middle school or primary school students accompanied by their parents. They burned and offered joss sticks, kowtowed on their knees and worshipped Buddha, while muttering prayers to the God of Literature for high marks and academic success.

But why was this magnificent Wenchang Temple not built in

Chengdu where there are many more students? Because this is the hometown of Emperor Wenchang, making it the most significant of the thousands of Wenchang Temples in China, and therefore, people believe that wishes made here for scholarly honour and official rank are most likely to be granted.

A Close Shave in Jiange

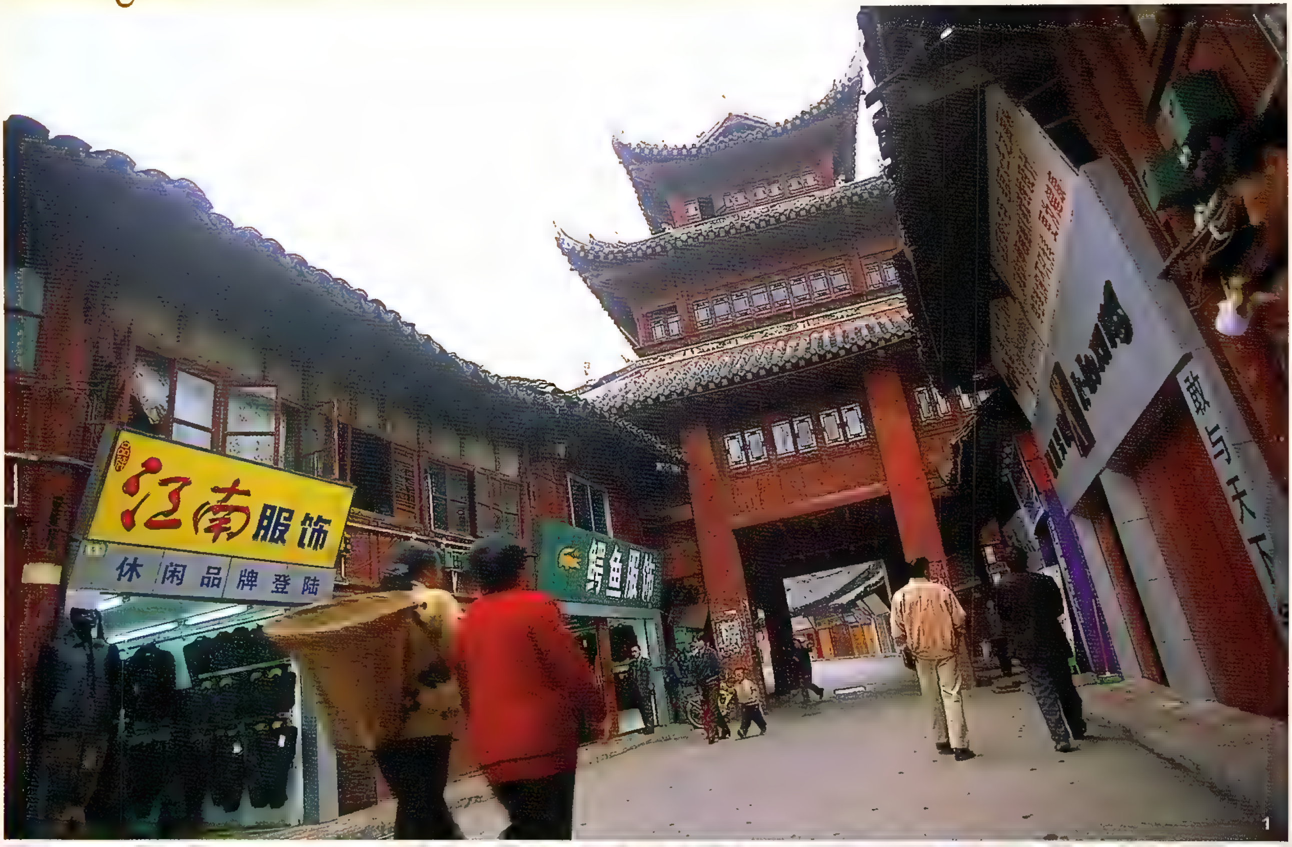
As the ancient Jinniudao Path continues northward, the mountains rise ever higher and more old cypress trees line the sides. It runs parallel with the national highway in one section. Viewed from inside a car, the ancient path feels strangely different. In less than an hour, our bus reached the town of Jiange County deep in the valley. Locked in by surrounding mountains, the town seems only to come alive by the river flowing around it. The streets along the river are bustling with business, looking especially lively with people and cars coming and going on the bridge. Modern buildings line the riverbanks. Yet far from the river in the old streets, one finds the charm of simplicity.

We didn't expect to find the ancient way of life so well preserved after 2,000 years. The narrow and somewhat winding Yanjie (Tobacco Street) is particularly appealing. It was devoted to the trade of tobacco leaves and pipe tobacco in the past, but is now totally given over

Previous page (main photo): Jianmenguan Pass — a natural fortress defended by the surrounding cliffs.
Previous page (small photo): The ancient path from the Three Kingdoms Period has been reconstructed along the cliffs at Mingyuexia Gorge.

1. **Street life in the ancient town of Jiange**
2. **Temple of General Guan Yu at Qiqu Mountain**
3. **Jinniudao Path begins here at the Wakouguan Pass of Zitong**

Wakouguan Pass — *Where the Rough Road Begins*



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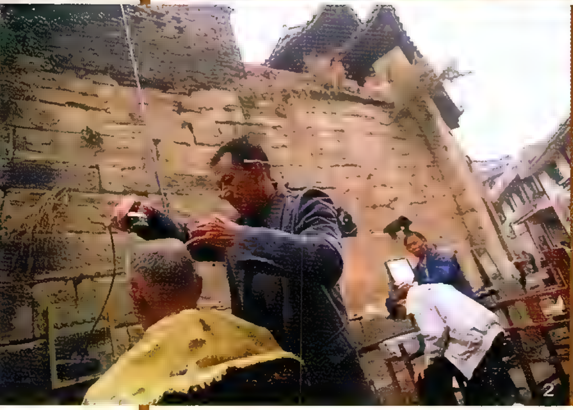

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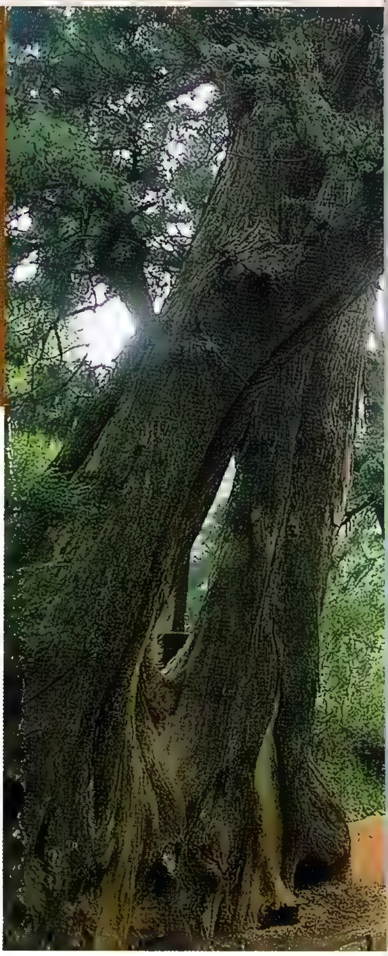

vegetable stalls. We arrived on the day of the county fair, and saw that the sides of the 500-m-long street were packed with farmers with their stalls of fresh vegetables and fruit. The old houses flanking the street remain as they were centuries ago, with the ground floor devoted to businesses and the upstairs used as residences.

Several barbers were doing business on the street with old-style wooden chairs, razors and mirrors that hung from the cracks in the old city walls.

I asked the price of a haircut. A barber wearing a Daoist bob replied, "One and a half yuan." "What about a shave only?" "One yuan." It was so cheap that I decided to give it a try. Reclining on the hard wooden chair, I felt the razor glide skillfully across my face. After the shave, my barber even gave me a massage on my head, neck and shoulders. I had never felt so relaxed.

The flea market in the old streets was quite long, extending for over a kilometre from Tobacco Street. Tables of the old teahouses were placed outside, and people were drinking tea as they played "Yezipai", a card game found only in Sichuan Province. Suddenly a shout came from behind, "Excuse me! Watch out, don't get hurt!" A short man, carrying a load of firewood that was taller than himself, was walking after a middle-aged woman towards a restaurant. The firewood was probably to be used to bake pancakes. I asked the man how much the firewood cost for half a kilogram. Stretching five fingers, he said, "Twenty-five cents!"

Strolling the Green Dragon Road

Jiange County boasts not only "the First Pass under Heaven"— Jianmenguan (Sword Gate) Pass — but also the Huangbai Dadao (Royal Cypress Road).

The ancient road stretches 150 km beneath a canopy of tall old cypress trees. Viewed from above, this ancient cypress road is like a long dark green dragon, twisting and rolling on mountain ridges.

When were these hundreds of thousands of cypress trees planted? Most trees are over 1,000 years old, and two or three people can just manage to encircle them with their arms outstretched. Legend has it that when General Zhang Fei of the Three Kingdoms Period (220 — 280) was guarding Langzhong, he often led his troops between the Jianmenguan and Wakouguan Passes. In summer with the scorching sun directly overhead, there was little shade. So Zhang Fei gave the order to plant cypress trees along the road. Later, local people named the trees "Zhang Fei Cypress Trees". Experts concluded that some of the trees dated back to the Qin (221—207 BC). So the ancient cypresses along the Jiange road were not planted in one specific dynasty. Also, they had always been the property of the royal court, and ownership by commoners was strictly forbidden, hence in the name "Royal Cypress Road". During the Qing Dynasty (1644—1911), a prefect of Jianzhou Prefecture named Qiao gave another name to the road — Cuiyuanlang (Corridor of Jade Green Cloud). But now "Corridor of Jade Green Cloud" refers only to the section between Jianmenguan Pass and Jiange County, where there is a good concentration of the towering ancient cypress trees and the ancient road has been best preserved.

This section of the "Corridor of Jade Green Cloud" has been protected with brick walls. Visitors have to pay admission to enter for a better view. Every cypress there is tall and thick, looking impressively. The road is covered by the original flagstones. Looking upwards we saw the old cypress trees shooting up, but we could barely see the sky as it was blocked by thick leaves and branches. Birds have set their homes on the branches and the air is filled with birdsongs.

We hiked further along the winding road, stopping now and then to measure the trees with our arms. There are many trees thick enough for three people to embrace with outstretched arms, probably about 2,000 years old. It was interesting to note that there are nameplates on many trees, as they have been "adopted" by people who paid tending fees. The management of so many trees requires a lot of manpower and resources. Some people named their trees after themselves, while others wrote auspicious poems on the trees. A student adopted an old tree on his 12th birthday and wrote on the plate: "I would like to share my lot with this tree." I noticed that the adopted trees were all tall, straight and thick, while the shapeless and twisted trees or those with broken branches and trunks like the "Adou Tree", named after the weak-minded and incompetent son of Liu Bei, founder of the Shu Han Kingdom, are not tended at all.

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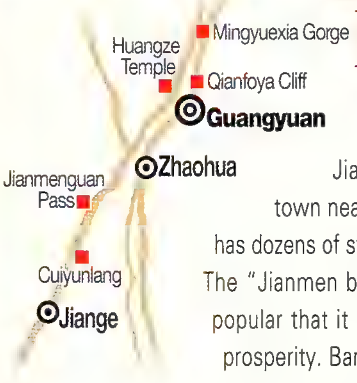
1. **The old town of Jiange**
2. **Getting a haircut by the ancient wall.**
3. **This twisted tree with broken branches is called "Adou Tree", named after an incompetent ruler.**
4. **The cypress tress along the path of Royal Cypress Road**

Jianmenguan Pass—A Town Built on Bean Curd


Mingyuexia Gorge
Huangze Temple
Qianfoya Cliff
Guangyuan
Jianmenguan Pass
Zhaohua
Cuiyunlang
Jiange

From the Royal Cypress Road, it takes only 30 minutes to reach the town of Jianmenguan. Once a small town near the Jianmenguan Pass, it has dozens of stores and small restaurants. The "Jianmen bean curd" has become so popular that it is the basis of the town's prosperity. Barely had we got off the bus when girls from each bean curd store surrounded us and accosted us loudly in Sichuan dialect to dine at their restaurants.

A Meal Fit for the Three Kingdoms

The kilometre-long street stretching from north to south is packed with stores and all the restaurants feature bean curd under many interesting names. We had lunch in a bean curd restaurant. Opening the menu, I noticed that all the dishes had bean curd and all the names were related to the stories of Three Kingdoms. We ordered a few dishes, which didn't taste as good as their names,

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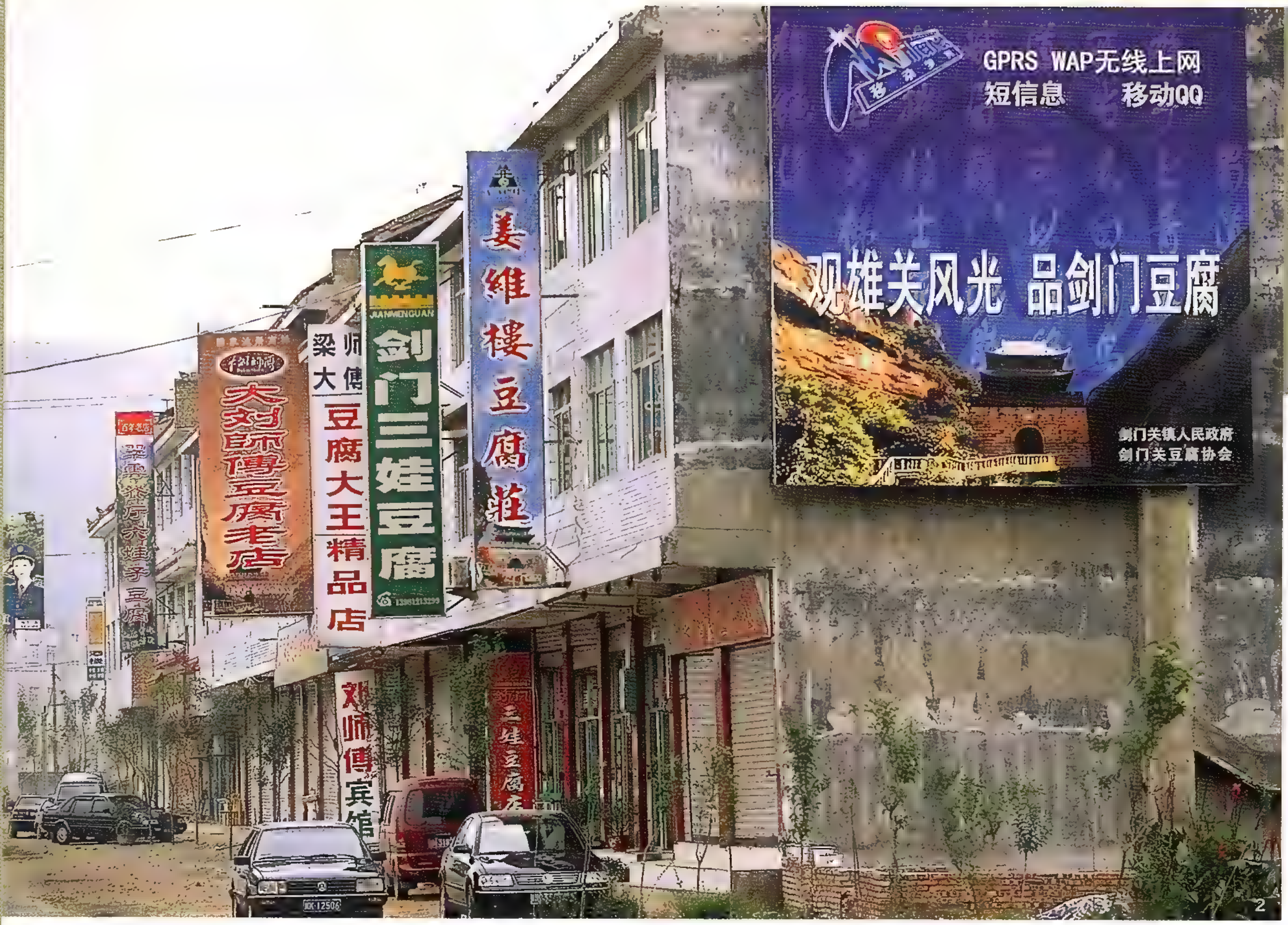
GPRS WAP无线上网
短信息 移动QQ
观雄关风光 品剑门豆腐
剑门关镇人民政府
剑门关豆腐协会
姜维楼豆腐庄
剑门三娃豆腐
梁大师傅豆腐大王精品店
大刘師傅豆腐老店
刘师傅宾馆
2

but other traditional Sichuan dishes like Mapo Doufu (Pork-minced Bean Curd) and Jiachang Doufu (Home-style Bean Curd) were much better. Usually, bean curd dishes named after Three Kingdoms figures or events cost twice as much as other dishes.

We left Jianmenguan Town and arrived at the Jianmenguan Pass about a kilometre away. The pass wall, built between two mountains that appear to have been cleft by a giant knife, faces imposingly northwest. Passing through the gate tower, the ground seems to sink suddenly, forming a grand valley. Huge rocks are piled up like walls, around which clear streams flow. On both sides of the pass tower are precipitous cliffs, shooting straight up for almost 100 m. Tourists looked like small ants moving slowly on the stone steps under the cliffs. Such dangerous cliffs are found in many places as the mountains range southeast to northwest continuously until they disappear into the horizon.

Nature's Fortress — Jianmenguan Pass

The gap allowing the road through the 72 peaks holds the only post road to Sichuan is the work of Nature itself. This precipitous route is Jianmenguan Pass.

I have been to many ancient passes, such as Shanhaiguan Pass, Juyongguan Pass, Hanguguan Pass, Tongguan Pass, Jiayuguan Pass and Yumenguan Pass. Most were built by man through natural barriers. Jianmenguan Pass, however, is completely formed by nature, with the gate tower as the fort.

There was a cable car station about 200 m from the gate tower, so we took the cable car up to a terrace at the waist of the Dajian (Great Sword) Mountain. We couldn't climb any further as there are no steps to the top.

Food for Thought in Zhaohua

After the deep Jianxi (Sword Stream) Valley, the highway sloped upwards. I looked back to see a "Great Wall" as long as 100 km, rising high on the horizon behind us. The wall was grayish white, shining in the setting sun. A sea of dark green forest stretched wave upon wave from the foot of the wall. The cleft in the middle was the Jianmenguan Pass. A friend majoring in geology once told me that the 72 peaks at Jianmen were formed at least 10 billion years ago during a rupture of

1. The town of Jianmenguan pass is famous for its doufu dishes.
2&3. Be sure to try the doufu delicacies at Jianmenguan
4. The cable car at Jianmenguan Pass
5. Nature's doorway through Jianmenguan Pass.

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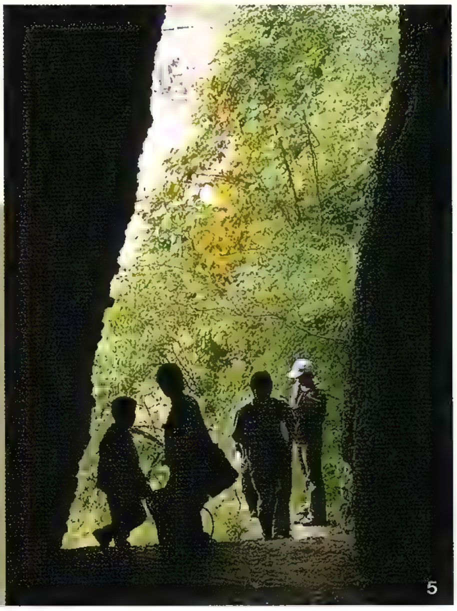

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Taking a Taxi on the Scenic Route

After the Jianmenguan Pass, we continued northward along the Qingjian (Green Gully) Valley for 50 km to Guangyuan. Since we wanted to experience the rigors of the ancient road to Sichuan, we avoided the shortcut of the newly built highway, opting for the old National Highway 108. We took taxi section by section. You can pay according to the metre or negotiate a fixed fee in advance. It is more convenient than taking the bus, though six or seven times more expensive, but you can stop anywhere you want by asking the driver, to take in the scenery and local life, or to shop, eat and take pictures.

Taxis in Sichuan are cheap, asking three or four yuan as the minimum, and a kilometre should cost no more than 1.5 yuan. I hired a taxi from Jianmenguan Pass to the ancient town of Zhaohua and then to Guangyuan, paying 120 yuan in the end. Shared among three people, it is just 40 yuan each. A bus would cost 20 yuan per person, but is less convenient.

the earth's crust, when one side rose up while the other fell, thus forming the "Great Wall" which stands high as Jianmen Mountain.

We left National Highway 108 before long and drove toward Zhaohua by the Jialing River.

It was noon when we reached Zhaohua, where the flagstone road took us back to other times. The old city wall had collapsed, leaving just a few low battlements and a gateway. Compared with 10 years ago when I came here to visit the old sites of the Three Kingdoms Period, the town had lost many historic structures. Many new buildings have sprung up, their walls all glued with ceramic tiles. But the Taishou Jie (Prefect's Street) — the longest in the town — has retained many traditional sights. Walking westward on the uneven flagstones, I saw farmers carrying loads of green vegetables, sweet potatoes and chayote, as well as women carrying babies on their backs. They greeted each other briefly as they passed each other by. Only the elderly holding walking sticks would stand together and chat to kill time.

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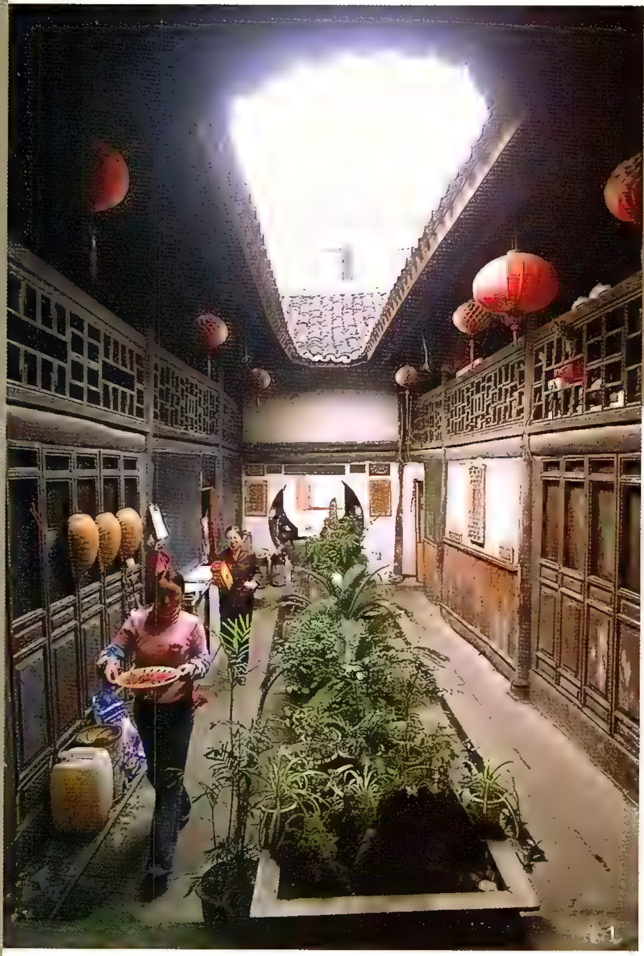
I noticed an ancient store with its front hall furnished with old carved tables and chairs, and many latticed windows and lintels, all with an air of antiquity. Next to the hall was a courtyard, flanked by wing-rooms with the tantalizing aroma of good food. Some young women carrying dishes entered the central hall. I followed them to the spacious hall where there were four square tables, and a group of well-dressed people. Bamboo chairs and tea tables were set at one side. With paintings and calligraphy scrolls hanging high on the wall and more latticed windows filling the spaces between, the old house had a scholarly ambience and was full of classic beauty.

He Wenqiang, the owner of the restaurant, is a smart and capable young man. He said the old house used to be the ancestral estate of a man during the Qing Dynasty. Later it became the office of the supply and marketing cooperative. He contracted the residence and named it Yixinyuan (Mind-Refreshing Garden). People came to the restaurant to have tea, dinner and to play chess, while appreciating its age-old woodcarvings as well as paintings and calligraphy. It also provided accommodation at just 10 yuan per bed each night. "What are your specialties?" I asked. "Fish from the Jialing River and farm-style food."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The ancient Jinniudao Path cuts through the Jianmenguan Pass, then leaves National Highway 108 and passes the ancient stone Jianxi Bridge, meandering to the north along the western slopes of Dajian Mountain. It then goes through the Tianxiong (Heavenly Hero) Pass on Niutou (Ox Head) Mountain before winding down to the ancient town of Zhaohua. The locals know this section of the path as the "Royal Cypress Road" because it is still lined with ancient cypress trees. In Zhaohua, the Jinniudao Path meets with another ancient path leading to Qingchuan, which is connected with Yinpingdao Path. Just a kilometre north of Zhaohua, the Bailongjiang and Qingjiang Rivers merge into the Jialing River, along which boats bustled in ancient times. Boats from the old Zhaohua Ferry go directly to Chongqing, entering the Yangtze River, and leaving Sichuan via the Three Gorges to reach Hunan, Hubei and Jiangsu Provinces.

Such a crucial transport hub must have once been a place of contention. When Liu Bei, who later founded the Shu Han Kingdom, first came to Sichuan, he immediately based himself at this strategically important place from where he returned to Jianmenguan Pass and occupied Wakouguan Pass before attacking Chengdu and seizing power from his cousin.

Walking 20 minutes outside the western city gate along a trail through fields, we reached the Jubai (Tangerine and Cypress) Ferry at the Jialing River, where the Jinniudao Pass meets the Jialing River, which has been a crossing point for at least 2,000 years. When Tang Emperor Li Longji tried to escape the armed rebellion led by An Lushan and Shi Siming in 755 and fled to Sichuan, he crossed the river here and went to Jianmenguan Pass via Zhaohua. Around 80 years ago, the dock was as busy as a small town. Now with the growth of highways, water transportation has declined. The old Jubai Ferry is deserted, with just a couple of broken ancient steles remaining.

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1. **Yixinyuan Garden, in the ancient town of Zhaohua, was built in the Qing Dynasty.**
2. **Jianmenguan Pass shrouded in mist.**
3. **Local crafts on display at Yixinyuan Garden.**
4. **Jianxi Bridge links Jianmenguan Town to Zhaohua Town.**
5. **The pathway at Jianmenguan Pass is not for the faint-hearted.**

Jianmenguan Pass — A Town Built on Bean Curd

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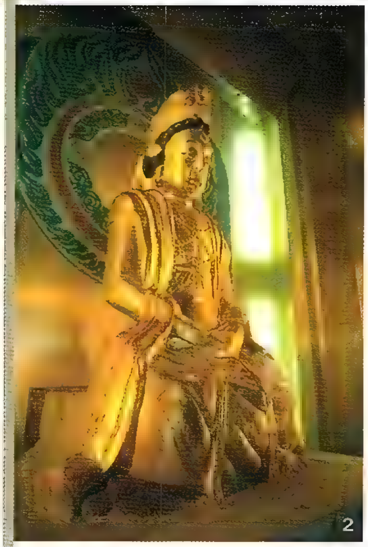
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Guangyuan — Where the Noodles Grow Cold Gracefully

There are two roads from Zhaohua to Guangyuan. One is the newly built thoroughfare, which takes half an hour, but offers little in the way of views. The other is National Highway 108, which takes 30 to 40 minutes longer but passes farmhouses, bamboo grooves, orchards, hills and streams in picturesque landscapes.

Guangyuan is famous not because it is the largest city in northern Sichuan Province, but because it is the hometown of the Tang Dynasty Empress Wu Zetian (624—705). The wide Jialing River flows pass one side of the city. To the east of the river lies the busy downtown Guangyuan. To the west is a stretch of hills where red towers and pavilions are half hidden in a deep green forest. The driver said the complex is Huangze (Emperor's Favour) Temple, built in memory of Wu Zetian by the locals. Established in the mid-Tang Dynasty, it has a history of over 1,200 years.

The guide said the empress's birthday falls on the 23rd day of the first month of the lunar calendar, which has also been set as "Women's Day" because Wu Zetian was the greatest daughter of

Guangyuan. Every year on this day, women young and old come from many miles away to gather in front of the Huangze Temple. They cruise in colourful boats, singing folk songs, performing lion dances and carrying dragon lanterns. Recent years have also seen group callisthenics, discos and sword performances. Two years ago, the Miss Guangyuan beauty contest was launched. But since the autumn commodity fair started in the city, this traditional festival was moved to September 1st. It is a pity that such a traditional festival has become so commercial.

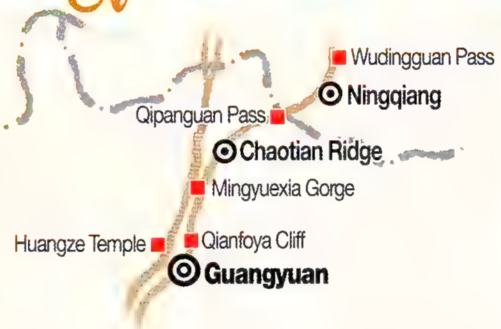
It was almost noon when we walked out of the Huangze Temple. We wondered where we could find the typical Guangyuan cuisine. The driver was kind enough to take us across the bridge to a snack bar that he said was popular and cheap, with good food guaranteed. Taxi drivers like him often ate there.

The storeowner came out with a plate of food mixed with red oil, saying it was "Empress's cold steamed noodles". Pointing to the bamboo steam box steaming on the cooker, she said that was "Zetian steamed stuffed bun". I asked her if there was really such a dish in history, and she replied, "Of course." It was handed down from her ancestors and it lived up to the name. The "Empress's cold noodles" looks very plain but there is a story behind it. It is said that Wu Zetian liked to eat Shanxi-style noodles, cooked by whittling off the dough into the boiling pot, when she was a little girl. Once when eating the noodles, she burned her tongue and flew into a rage with the cook, saying, "Why can't you make cold noodles?" The cook knew that she was the daughter of the Guangyuan governor, and immediately invented a new recipe for her. The cook made cold noodles steamed with rice soup that tasted sweet and spicy. Wu tasted it, and found it the most delicious. She became addicted to it and ate it everyday. After she became empress, she asked the cook to the imperial palace in the capital Chang'an to cook the noodles especially for her.

When she finished the story, the owner pointed to the store across the street owned by an old man, saying that he sold "Empress's Walnut Cakes".

1. **The narrow dam on South River at Guangyuan**
2. **The golden statue of the only Empress of China, Wu Zetian, at age 60**
3. **The ancient town of Guangyuan has kept its historic charm.**
4. **Huangze Temple was established over 1,200 years ago in honour of Empress Wu.**
5. **Jiangwei Tomb lies on the hill near the town of Jianmenguan.**

Mingyuexia Gorge — A Road Through the Air



The autumn wind brought in a drizzle. I could not sleep well that night, worrying that the weather might affect our journey the next day. Unexpectedly, the sky cleared in the morning. We checked out immediately and hired a car to Mingyuexia (Bright Moon) Gorge in the north.

The Cliff of a Thousand Buddhas

Shortly after we left the county town of Guangyuan, we saw a small hill ahead by the river. Between the waterside and the cliffs, a high archway stood to mark National Highway 108. As soon as we passed the archway, I asked the driver to stop the car, as I had seen the cliff face of the other side of the hill was carved with thousands of niches, making it look like a huge honeycomb. Surprisingly, we had reached Qianfoya (the Thousand-Buddha Cliff) of Guangyuan. We bought our entry tickets and began to climb a trail winding up to the top. There are more than 10 rows of carved niches, one upon another, on the cliff face. According to the labels in each niche, the sculptures are from different dynasties, beginning from the South and North Dynasties to the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing, each displaying a distinctive style. I asked an attendant how many Buddhist sculptures were enshrined there and was astonished to be told that there were 7,000.

Entering a stone gate, we descended a staircase on to a bridge made of wooden planks. Every step sent out loud, hollow noises. When I looked down carefully over the wooden handrails, I found that we were walking on a plank road suspended in the air. It was a section of the "ancient plank road" that the local people had rebuilt by following the pictures in classic books and using the original square holes left on the ruins. Walking down to the riverside, we boarded a boat to have a close look at the holes. Looking up from the river, the hanging plank

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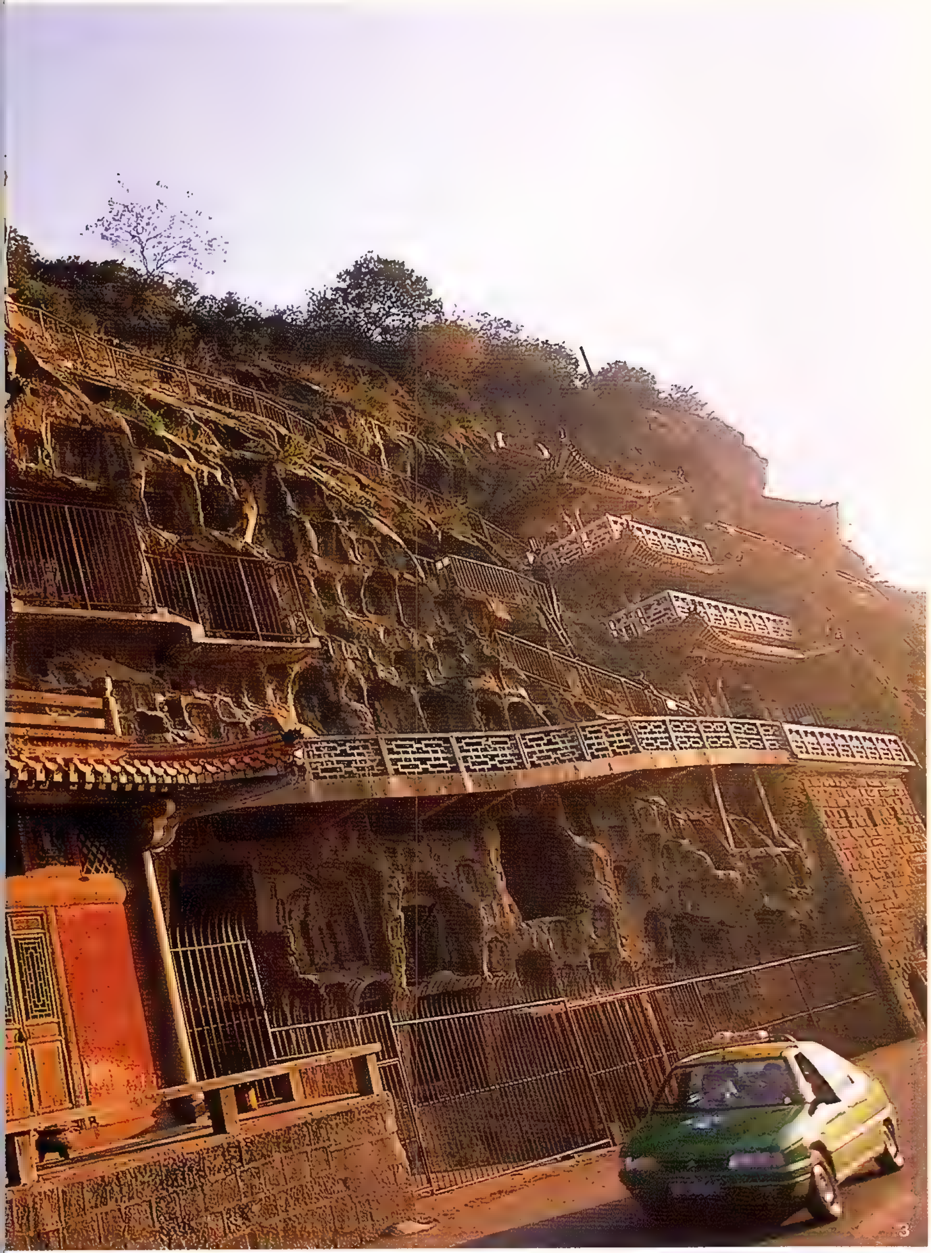


road, winding up and down, was imposing. On the cliff surface are three rows of square holes in groups of four, forming a line. Each hole is 30 cm on each side and 50 cm deep, and they are traces of the ancient plank road. The holes in the middle row held the timber joists, on which planks were laid to build the road. Holes in the lower row held the support poles. The place has been developed into a scenic spot, Ruins of the Early Qin Plank Road, which, viewed from a distance, resembles an aerial pavilion. No wonder it was often referred as the "bridge tower" or "pavilion road" in ancient poems.

Two kilometres from Bright Moon Gorge, there is the famous Qingfeng (Clear Wind) Gorge. There is no road to it, but it can be seen from the train when it passes nearby.

The ancient route to Sichuan starts from Chengdu, and after going through the rugged landscapes of Dajian (Great Sword) and Xiaojian (Small Sword) Mountains, it is blocked by Bright Moon Gorge. The ancient people had to open a path if they wanted to reach Sichuan from the Central Plains. They did so by digging holes into the cliff to build a plank road. It was not until the turning of the Tang and Song Dynasties that the narrow plank road winding from the cliffs of Bright Moon Gorge to the top of Chaotian Ridge was completed.

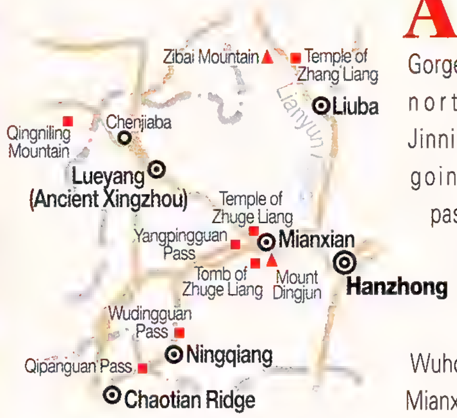
On the banks of Bright Moon Gorge, one can see the traces of six roads leading to the outside, from which it has been dubbed the "Museum of Ancient Chinese Communication". They show all the forms of ancient transport: a walking trail dating back to ancient times, a plank road built on the cliff surface in the early years of the Qin Dynasty at the government's initiation, a trail along the riverside used by boat trackers, the waterway on the Jialing River, the Sichuan-Shaanxi Road built during 1930s, and the tunnel of the Baoji-Chengdu Railway constructed in the 1950s.

Forcing Open the Tiger's Mouth

For years, people have been working hard to maintain the road in Bright Moon Gorge. The difficulties the road builders had to overcome during construction in the 1930s indicated the danger of the section. The technicians had attempted to avoid the gorge, but failed. Eventually, they blasted open a ledge on the cliff above the ancient plank road, forming the notorious Laohuzui, or Tiger Mouth. Now, a new highway built two years ago runs around Bright Moon Gorge. The Baoji-Chengdu Railway had been constructed by going through the mountains on the west bank of the gorge.

1. **The ancient path at Mingyuexia Gorge, Guangyuan.**
2. **The road on the east bank of Mingyuexia Gorge promises a white-knuckle ride.**
3. **The honeycomb surface of Qianfoya Cliff at Guanyuan.**
4. **The remnants of the ancient cliff path south of Mingyuexia Gorge.**

Mt. Dingjun — *A Hero's Tomb*


Zibai Mountain
Temple of Zhang Liang
Liuba
Lianyun
Qingniling Mountain
Chenjiaba
Lueyang (Ancient Xingzhou)
Temple of Zhuge Liang
Yangpingguan Pass
Mianxian
Hanzhong
Tomb of Zhuge Liang
Mount Dingjun
Wudingguan Pass
Ningqiang
Qipanguan Pass
Chaotian Ridge

At noon we left Bright Moon Gorge and drove to the north along the Jinniudao Path. After going through the passes of Qipanguan and Wudingguan, we approached the Tomb of Wuhou (Zhuge Liang) in Mianxian County.

After passing Qingyangyi and Da'anyi, we entered Mianxian County. We first paid tribute at the Temple of Wuhou (Zhuge Liang), then drove to the foot of the Mt. Dingjun. They are not high, but luxuriantly covered with trees. Their 12 peaks form a range of six kilometres long. Mt. Dingjun played a strategic role during the Three Kingdoms Period (220—280). Zhuge Liang, the advisor and strategist of Shu, launched six attacks on the Wei (one of Three Kingdoms) army stationed at Qishan, using Dingjun as his base, where he spent the most glorious eight years in his life. In accordance with his will, his remains were buried at the foot of the mountain to encourage his soldiers to continue the cause. Liu Chan, son of Liu Bei, who took the throne after his father's death, had a temple dedicated to Zhuge Liang, the first of its kind in China, built at the foot of Mt. Dingjun. The tomb became such a sacred place that when the enemy army of Wei passed through, its commander would order his men to keep silent so as not to stir the spirit of the man who was resting there.

Authentic Zhuge Liang's Tomb?

At the foot of the mountain, we visited the Tomb of Zhuge Liang. Surrounded by huge ancient cypress trees, it was tranquil, solemn and mysterious.

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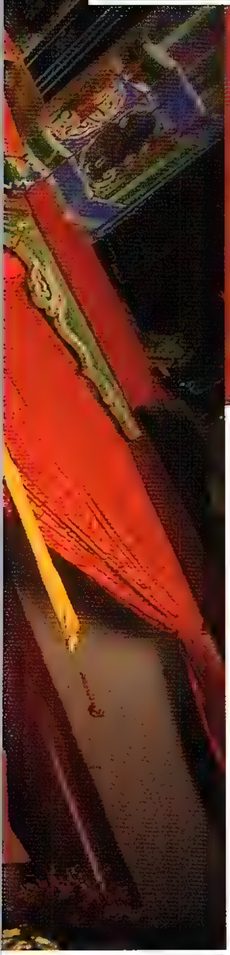

Many tombs are alleged to be Zhuge Liang's, but experts have identified this as the authentic one. Before he died at Wuzhangyuan, the strategist said he wanted to be buried at the foot of Mt. Dingjun, where he had spent the last eight years. It is believed that as Zhuge Liang died on the battlefield, it was natural that he should be buried at the place where he had fallen. The couplets hung on the front door of the Chongsheng Temple give a distinct description of this historical figure, "Working for the restoration of the Liu Family's Han monarch in life; Guarding the Shu Kingdom at Mt. Dingjun in death."

The tomb boasts two giant cinnamon trees planted in the Three Kingdoms Period, which are recorded in history books as "the two cinnamon tomb guards". At the end of our visit, we found two burial mounds in the cemetery of Zhuge Liang. Another mystery: which is the original tomb? Our tour guide just answered in riddles, "The true tomb is not true and the false one is not false."

Yangpingguan Pass: Where Old Meets New

It took us quite a long time in the county seat of Mianxian to get information about the ruins of the ancient Yangpingguan Pass.

Located in the Hanzhong Basin, it was a strategic post for the defence of Shaanxi, Gansu and Sichuan Provinces, and was fought over by various dynasties. These wars left a rich legacy of cultural relics and legends, but also damaged to the ancient defensive structure.

When we arrived at the pass, the reconstruction of the city walls

1. **The statue of Zhuge Liang (centre).**
2. **This modern highway bridge bypasses the past hazardous ancient road.**
3. **Mt. Dingjun has been a famous landmark since the Three Kingdoms Period.**
4. **The tomb of Zhuge Liang.**
5. **Boats ply along the Jialing River from Guangyuan to Chongqing and the Yangtze River.**

Mt. Dingjun — A Hero's Tomb

had just been completed. The rebuilt western city wall goes links with the ruins of the embankment. Outside the city walls is a large stretch of farmland, which will soon disappear under a big square being developed to link the ancient pass and the highway.

A Great Statesman's Hideaway

From Yangpingguan Pass, we drove five hours to the county seat of Liuba, following the ancient Baoxie Road, along which Zhuge Liang marched to Wuzhangyuan to fight his last battle. It was also on this road that his coffin was carried to the burial site at the foot of Mt. Dingjun.

Driving northwest from Liuba, we travelled on the Lianyun plank road. However, we could not see any trace of the old plank road as the square holes had long been destroyed in road expansion projects. It took us only 20 minutes to reach Miaotaizi Temple.

Miaotaizi (Terrace) Temple got its name from the Temple of Zhang Liang at the foot of Zibai (Purple Cypress) mountain range. Lying between the counties of Fengxian and Liuba, the range stretches to Mianxian and Lueyang of Sichuan in the south, and borders Gansu's Huixian and Liangdang Counties in the west. To its east is the Baoxie plank road, and to the north are the Qinling Mountain and Mount Taibai, which serve as its screen walls. The main peak of Zibai stands above the clouds like a dancing dragon. On the archway in front of the temple has the words "Temple of the Han Lord Zhang Liang" carved. The ancient buildings are beautifully decorated with carved beams and painted columns. Inside the main hall is a golden sculpture in the image of Zhang Liang, which looks handsome and solemn. The Han Dynasty historian Sima Qian commented in his book that he had imagined that Zhang Liang was a gallant man of large build, but in pictures, he found Zhang "has delicate features as a fine woman".

A man of outstanding intelligence, Zhang helped Liu Bang realize his ambition to establish the Han Dynasty. But his wise decision to

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withdraw from the turbulent political currents and live in solitude in the mountains, giving up the luxury life and devoting himself to Taoist study won him the respect of later generations. After the founding of his empire, Liu Bang killed many of his supporters who had won distinction in the founding of Han Dynasty. Zhang Liang was the only one who survived and spent the latter half of his life at the foot of Mount Zibai. Many famous historical figures were deeply moved by the deeds of Zhang and left calligraphy works on stone tablets. Reading the tablets, I found ancient officials and scholars admired Zhang's wisdom and generous spirit.

Lueyang: the Town of Many Battles

Our next stop was the ancient town of Xingzhou, today's Lueyang. To get there, we had to first return to Liuba, from where we detoured to Mianxian and travel northwest along the Sichuan-Shaanxi Highway, passing Xiakouyi, Jianchaling and Jieguantingyi. After more than three hours, we arrived in the county seat of Lueyang.

Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty established it as a county in 111 B.C. So the county seat is 2,100 years old. Its name changed to Xingzhou during the rule of the Western Wei. By the Tang Dynasty, the town had developed into an administrative centre of prefectural level. Due to its strategic location on the roads from Shaanxi or Gansu to Sichuan, it was often fought over in ancient times. When Zhuge Liang attacked Cao Cao's army at Qishan, he passed Lueyang several times. In the Southern Song Dynasty (1127—1279), Wu Jie and his brother used Lueyang as their base when they defeated the Kin army and protected Sichuan from invasion. Traces of their heroic fight against the Jin invaders can be seen in many places on the ancient Sichuan road, including Dasanguan Pass, ancient Fengzhou Baishui River and Lueyang. The Wu brothers had to retreat while continuing their fight, until they died in battle at Lueyang. Wu Jie's tomb is situated on a hill opposite the Lueyang Railway Station.

It was raining when we walk through the beautiful town of Lueyang, which lies between the Jialing and Badu Rivers, and between the picturesque Xishan Hill, Nanshan (Man) Hill and Nushan (Woman) Hill. Not far to the south is the famous Lingyan Temple. We met the director of the county's cultural centre, a man in his 70s, who told us about the history of the ancient Sichuan Road and the vicissitudes of Lueyang town.

He had climbed the Qingniling Mountain ten times to look for traces of the ancient road. In the 1950s, Li Keran, a noted painter, visited Lueyang and in the 1960s, Shu Tong, a master calligrapher, came to town. Mr. Hong served as the companion and guide on both occasions, spending happy days with them, creating poems, paintings or calligraphy.

Searching for the Ancient Road Traces on the Qingnihe River

Qingniling Mountain was the most difficult section on the Ancient Sichuan Road and had always given travellers great memories. We had to see this road, though the heavy rain had made the journey even more difficult.

At daybreak the next morning, despite the pouring rain, we took a bus from Lueyang to Baishui River. The bus route crossed Wulongling Mountain, goes through the Wulongdong Tunnel and Huixian in Gansu to reach Baishui River. The narrow and winding road built on mountain slopes is steep and has many sharp turns. It was a difficult ride as the rain had made the road even more dangerous.

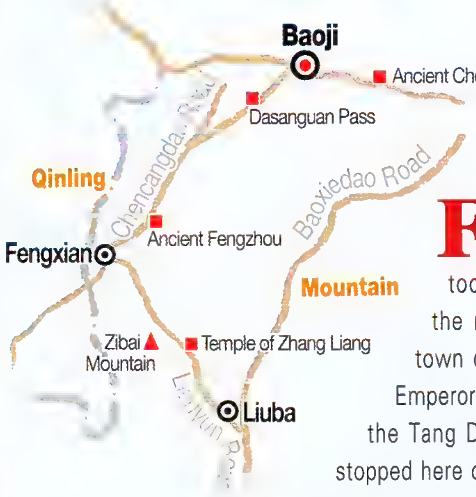
I spent more than two hours worrying about our safety until we finally reached Baishui River. The happy news was that both the rain and wind had stopped, so we drove to Qingniling immediately. Our car ran along the scenic Qingnihe River. Flowing from Qingniling Mountain, it makes many turns and runs quietly into the Jialing River at Baishui River.

After driving about 15 km, we saw a suspension bridge ahead. On the other side of the bridge was a settlement surrounded by dense trees and bamboo groves, from where chickens clucked and dogs barked. We stopped our car and walked into the village of Chenjiaba. At the entrance, an old man greeted us. We asked about Qingniling Mountain, he told us there was barely any road on the mountain, which marks the border between Chengxian of Gansu and Lueyang of Shaanxi. He said the railroad and highway made it unnecessary to cross the mountain.

Qingniling Mountain is located in Qinghe Township in the northwest of Lueyang County. The mountain abounds with cliffs. As it rains frequently in the area, making the road muddy, the mountain was given the name Qingniling, meaning Black Mud. This section was the toughest on the ancient route to Sichuan, as depicted in Li Bai's poem "The Tough Sichuan Road": "The road on Qingniling Mountain makes many turns. In a hundred steps, you turn nine times around the rocks and peaks." I looked up and saw imposing cliffs veiled in clouds and mists.

1. **This city gate is all that remains of the ancient Xingzhou City.**
2. **The hand-shaped Lingzhi, used as a medicinal root, grows around Zibai Mountain.**
3. **The rivers along Lianyun Road are known for their sparkling, clear waters.**

A Journey into No-man's Land



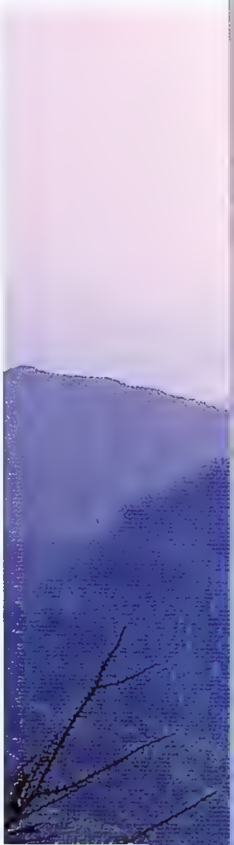
From Baishui River, we took a train to the mountainous town of Fengzhou. Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty once stopped here on his way to Sichuan. Two streams run by the town, one from its east, and the other from its west. To its south is the mountain, and to its north is the Jialing River. The topography makes the town a strategic defence post. In ancient times, Fengzhou was not only an important fortress on the road to Chencangdao, but the start of the Lianyun Plank Road, which linked the Chencangdao and Baoxiedao Roads.

We stayed in a hotel close to the Fengzhou Railway Station and slept soundly to the sound of the Jialing River. I did not expect to find such a clean and well-equipped guestroom in a small town like this.

Driving on the ancient Chencangdao Road, we travelled from Fengzhou to the Qinling Mountain. Upstream along the Jialing River, which winds down the mountain, we reached the top of Mount Guanyin after half an hour. From there on, the peaks became higher and higher, indicating we were approaching the main peak of Qinling Mountain.

An ancient saying goes, "For 48,000 years, no people have lived on the Qin border." The area had been a wild land much longer, probably since these imposing mountains were thrown up 100 million year ago. Crossing the heartland of China, the Qinling Mountain divides China into the north and south. For thousands of years, the magnificent peaks shrouded in clouds and mists blocked communications between the two parts of the country. Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai was known as a carefree and optimistic man, who loved to travel across the country to see the landscapes. When he saw the Qinling Mountain, however, he could not help sighing at the wilderness and remoteness. In those days, it was extremely difficult to travel on Sichuan Road.

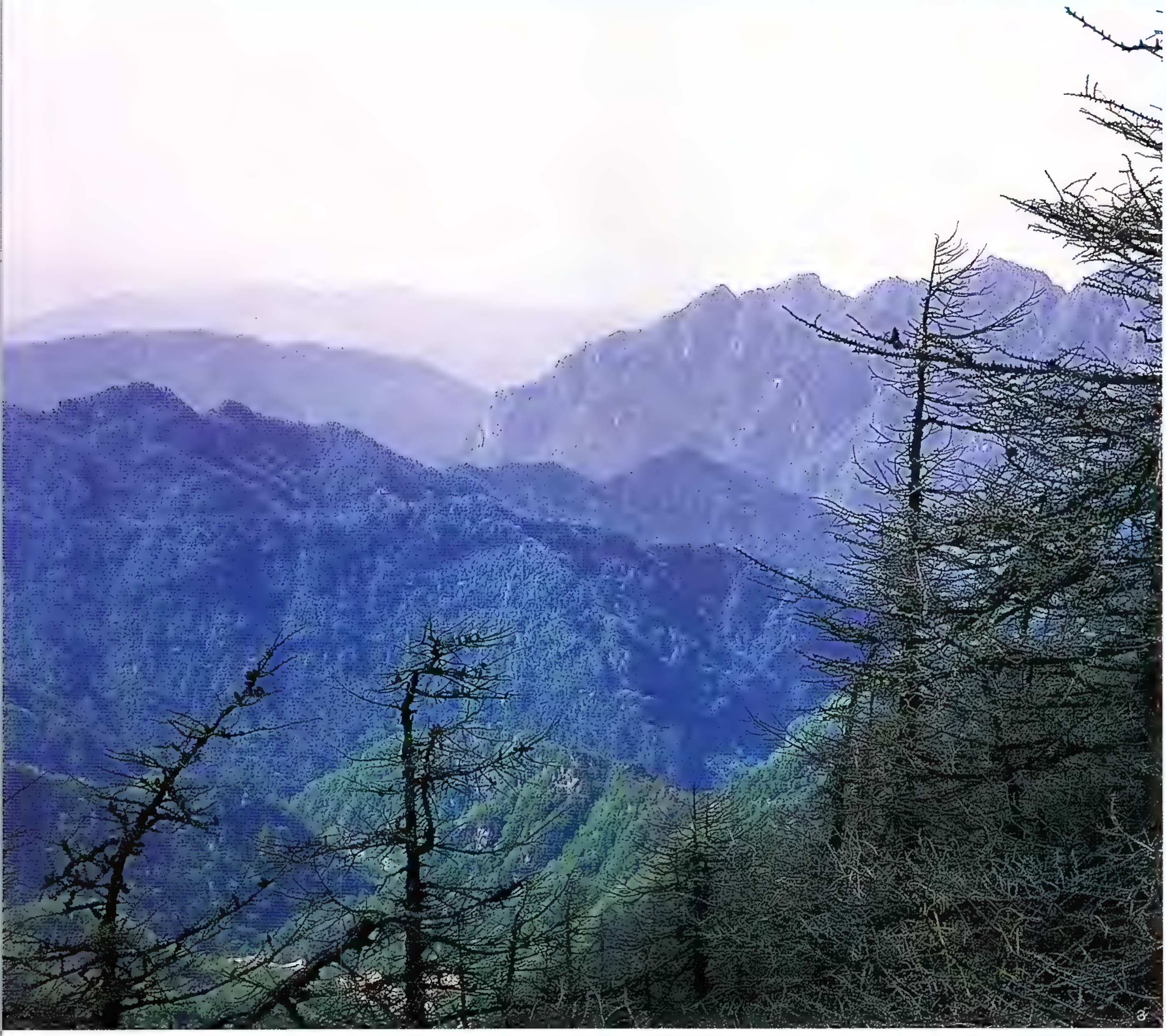
The Chinese people, for thousands of years, have tried every means to build communications between Shaanxi and Sichuan. In addition to the ancient Sichuan and Chencangdao Road, we have now the Baoji-Chengdu Railway and a modern highway.



A Gate Guarding the Shaanxi Valley

We began to climb along a paved trail and soon reached Dasanguan Pass. From the top of the fortress, I could see how strategically crucial the pass was. On both sides are steep cliffs, leaving an opening of less than 10 m. On one side is only a thread-like trail leading to the outside, and to the other is a deep valley. That is why it was known as "the throat between Shaanxi and Sichuan" in ancient times. Looking to the far distance, I saw many peaks, inside and outside the pass, making two protective screens to guard the road across the Qinling Mountain and linking Shaanxi and Sichuan, the only channel for postal services. It was the most difficult pass between Shaanxi and Sichuan, but the last one that we passed on our journey.

Thanks to its dangerous topography, Dasanguan Pass was easy to



defend, making it the scene of many battles: the battle fought by Han Xin in the war between the Chu and Han states, the battle between Cao Cao and Zhang Lu, and the battles fought by Zhuge Liang. The Wu brothers, Wu Jie and Wu Lin, also fought defensive battles here and defeated several onslaughts from the Jin army led by Jin Wushu.

Gone are those warring years. All we could see were the crumbling fortress in the autumn wind. On a huge rock, the statues of the Wu brothers continued to guard the pass.

Descending the Qinling Mountain from Dasanguan Pass, we arrived in Baoji, a prosperous city in Shaanxi, within half an hour. Baoji was the ancient Chencang, the start point for the ancient journey to Sichuan. The road was not direct, but it was smooth and adequate for both people and horses. Densely packed with villages and towns, this place was safe and had abundant supplies, making it an important communication post.

The town of Chencang, during the Qin and Han Dynasties, was situated 15 km southeast of Baoji, adjacent to the Tenth Cotton Mill of Shaanxi. The ruins, by the Loess Plateau and facing the Weishui River, are on flat land. The terrace indicates there should have been the upper and lower towns, but not a single trace of these can be found on the site, which is now become farmland.

So far, our journey along the ancient route to Sichuan had gone to plan. In 10 days, we had gone from Wakouguan Pass in Sichuan Province to Shaanxi Province, one more group in the many that had travelled this route through history.

1. **Decorations on the brick gate of Zhang Liang Temple.**
2. **The stone tablet of Daisanguan Pass was erected by the villagers.**
3. **The mountains of Fengxian County.**

Travelling Tips on the Ancient Shaanxi-Sichuan Road

The Baoji — Chengdu railway built along the ancient Chencang plank road

Getting there:

Flights are available from many Chinese cities, including Hong Kong and Xi'an, to Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province.

Local Transport:

- **Trains:** After you decide where you want to go, you can journey by train from Chengdu, Sichuan, or Xi'an, Shaanxi, and change to local buses to reach destinations. It is advisable to avoid travelling during long public holidays, such as the Spring Festival, summer vacation, the May 1 and October 1 week-long holidays. The rest of the year, it is easy to get train tickets, including express, air-conditioned and sleeper trains. It is best to book your tickets 10 to 15 days ahead. Big hotels offer such services, but charge 20 yuan per ticket.

The suspension bridge over Qingnihe River

Wenchang Temple at Qiqu Mountain

- **Buses:** Bus services are frequent on the route. But medium-sized buses, which usually run shorter distances and stop more often, are more convenient for tourists. They will stop if you hail them on the road.
- **Car Hire:** Much more expensive than the bus, hire cars and cars with drivers are available. To rent a car, you need to pay deposit and leave your ID at the car rental company. You must cover all expenses on the road. To hire a car with a driver, you must negotiate a daily rate with the car rental company. You must also pay for toll stations, bridges, parking and other incidental costs.

Self-drive costs 100 to 400 yuan a day, depending on the type of car; with a driver, when the mileage is within 200 km, the daily rate is 400 to 800 yuan. Whatever you choose, be prepared for certain problems. Hire cars must be returned to the city from where they were hired, while drivers must be paid for their return journey plus a tip.

- **Taxis:** You can hire the taxi to visit scenic spots, paying by the meter or by negotiation. Extra expenses may be incurred if anything unexpected happens en route. The 200-km journey from Guangyuan to Mianxian, for example, costs 400 yuan, and you are free to stop anywhere on the way, either for shopping or sightseeing.

Accommodation:

Chengdu is a big city, but it has inexpensive hotels and a standard room can cost 100 yuan; two- or three-star hotels charge around 200 yuan for a room. Accommodation is more expensive in Xi'an. In Guangyuan, in the middle of the ancient Shaanxi-Sichuan Road and close to many scenic spots, you have more choice. I recommend the following because they are conveniently located downtown. Guangyuan Hotel offers good accommodation; a standard room costs 160 to 200 yuan, including breakfast. It is close to the bus station for special route buses, such as that to Zhaohua and Jianmenguan Pass. Mingyuelou (Bright Moon Tower) Hotel is 100 meters from the Guangyuan Hotel. Its charges 160 yuan for a luxury suite, 120 yuan for a single room and 100 yuan for a standard room.

Food:

Wheat-based food is the main staple in Shaanxi Province. As a great part of the ancient road goes through mountainous areas, you cannot find many characteristic snacks. In Sichuan, you can have spicy Sichuan food, especially hotpot, which is served in the majority of Guangyuan's restaurants. The dishes may be too spicy for you if you're not a Sichuan native. The roast duck served at the Zhongyazi Restaurant near the Guangyuan Hotel is a traditional dish. The duck cooked here is delicious, the lower part of the duck wing in particular. Often the ducks, each costing about 30 yuan, are sold out before dinnertime. The restaurant's other Sichuan dishes are as good.

Dishes made of bean curd are very popular in Jianmenguan, and almost every restaurant claims that its dishes are the most authentic. A set of dishes called "Three Kingdoms Bean Curd Feast", however, does not taste as good as it looks. But other ordinary dishes are good. Obviously the best place to taste real Sichuan food is Chengdu, where all kinds of traditional restaurants, big and small, offer delicious local dishes and snacks.

• Mount Doutuan

Located in the suburbs of Jiangyou, it can be reached by taking a bus from Chengdu, Zitong or Mianyang. The mountain is a strange shape, with three peaks rocketing high into the sky. Iron chains linking these peaks used to serve as the post road. There are scenic spots such as Foye (Buddha) Cave, Xingguang (Star Light) Cave and Kuangshan Academy on the mountain.

• Li Bai's Former Residence

The house is situated at Qinglianchang, 15 km south of Jiangyou. Li Bai moved to this house with his father when he was five years old and stayed there until he was 25. At the site, you can see the Taibai Temple built in memory of the great poet, Mozhen Stream, and the tomb inside which Li Bai's clothes were buried. An ancient stone archway in Li Bai's memory can be found in Qinglianchang; in the urban district of Jiangyou is a Memorial Museum of Li Bai.

• The Ancient Town of Langzhong

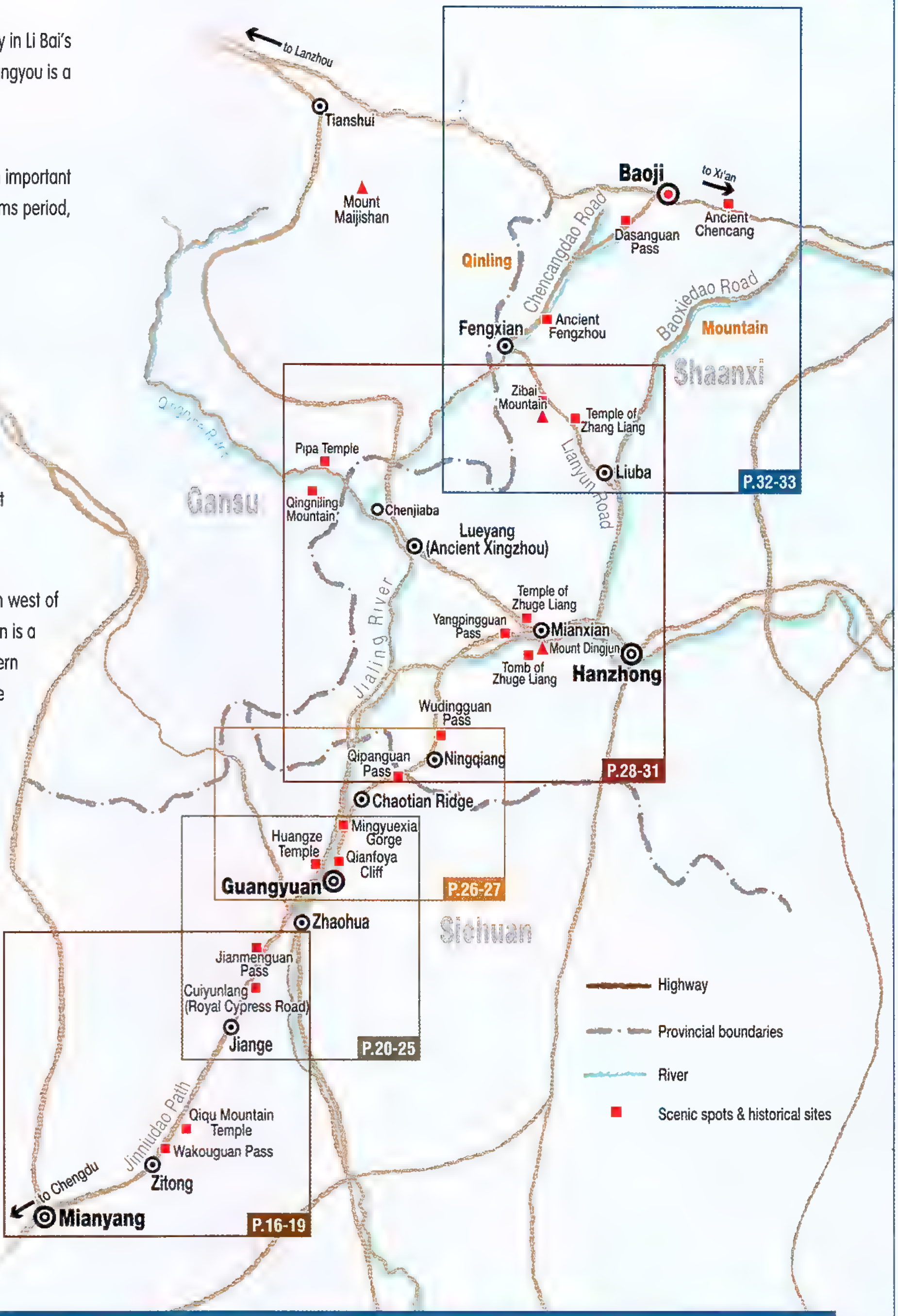
Located 90 km southeast of the old town of Jiange, it was once an important town in northern Sichuan. General Zhang Fei of the Three Kingdoms period, was stationed in town and killed here. A Zhang Fei Temple has been built. The Drum Tower and the old street are well preserved. In its suburbs is a huge Buddha statue built in the Tang Dynasty. Langzhong can be reached from Guangyuan, Zitong or Jiange by bus.

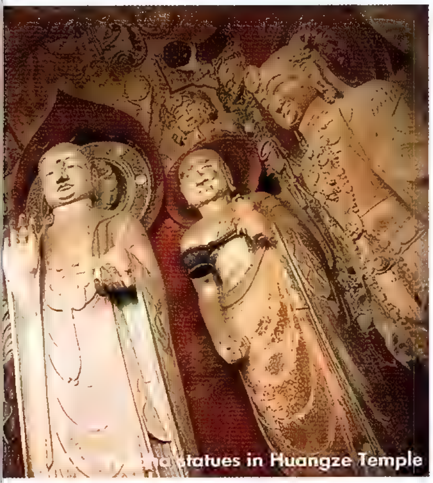
• Jiuzhaigou and Huanglong

You can go to the Jiuzhaigou — Huanglong Scenic Area from Chengdu, Guangyuan or Jiangyou. The distance is shorter if you go from Guangyuan, where tourist buses are available at major hotels.

• Mt. Maijishan Buddhist Grottoes

The grottoes are located in Tianshui City, Gansu Province, 130 km west of Baoji. You can get there from Baoji by train or bus. Mount Maijishan is a holy place where many Buddhist caves were built from the Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing. The grottoes are carved on the cliff faces halfway up the mountain, which looks like a heap of wheat straws, hence its name, Maiji. To visit the grottoes, you must climb suspended ladders.


to Lanzhou
Tianshui
Mount Maijishan
Baoji
to Xi'an
Ancient Chencang
Dasanguan Pass
Chencangdao Road
Qinling
Mountain
Baoxiedao Road
Fengxian
Ancient Fengzhou
Shaanxi
Zibai Mountain
Temple of Zhang Liang
Lianyun Road
Liuba
P.32-33
Pipa Temple
Gansu
Qingniling Mountain
Chenjiaba
Lueyang (Ancient Xingzhou)
Temple of Zhuge Liang
Yangpingguan Pass
Mianxian
Mount Dingjun
Tomb of Zhuge Liang
Hanzhong
Jialing River
Wudingguan Pass
Qipanguan Pass
Ningqiang
P.28-31
Chaotian Ridge
Mingyuexia Gorge
Huangze Temple
Qianfoya Cliff
Guangyuan
P.26-27
Zhaohua
Sichuan
Jianmenguan Pass
Cuiyunlang (Royal Cypress Road)
Jiange
P.20-25
Jinniudao Path
Qiqu Mountain Temple
Wakouguan Pass
Zitong
to Chengdu
Mianyang
P.16-19
Highway
Provincial boundaries
River
Scenic spots & historical sites

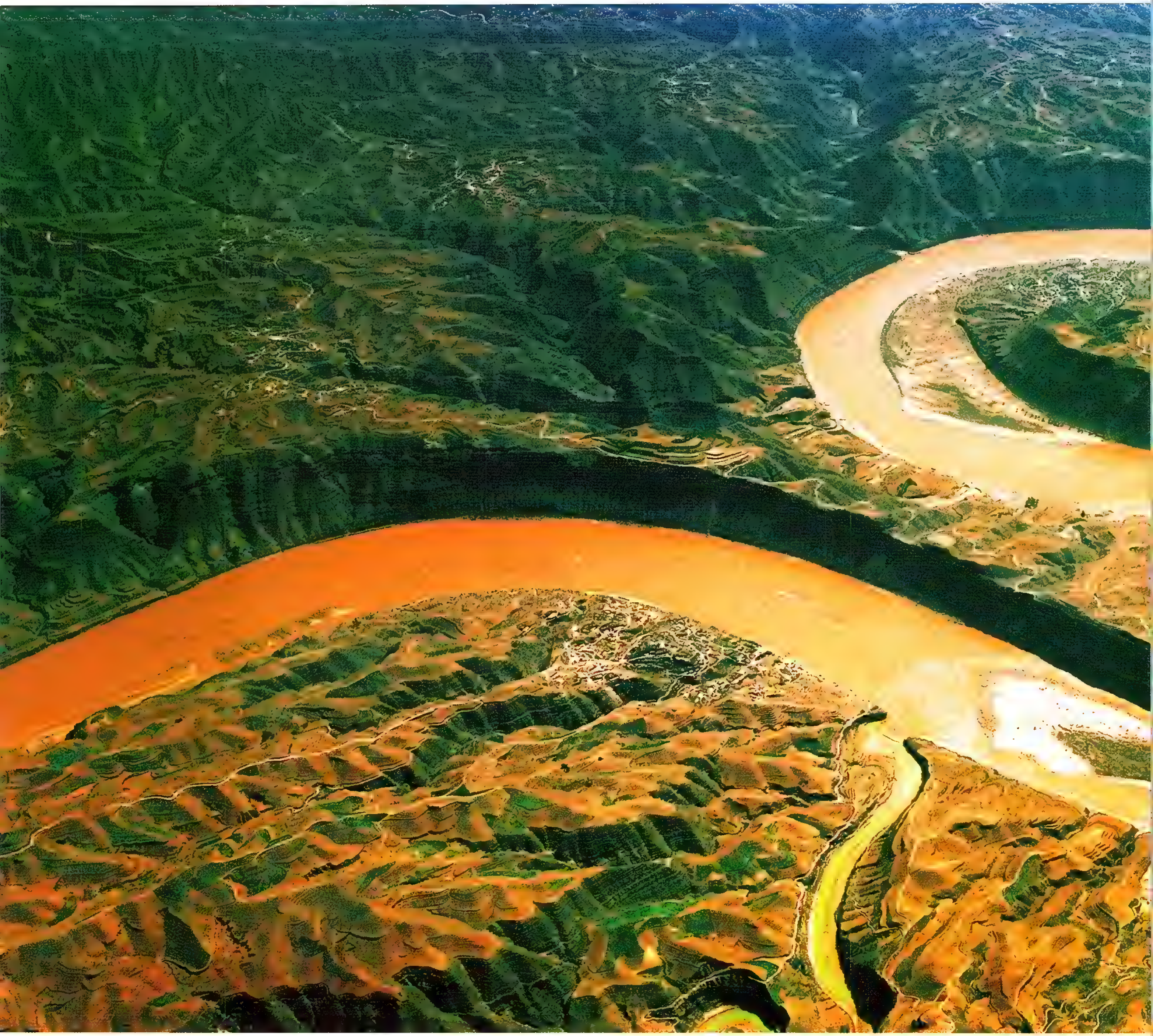


statues in Huangze Temple

Afterword

Exhausting and arduous the journey to the ancient route to Sichuan might be, we still found the trip worthwhile. The landscape along the way left us in awe of its stunning beauty, though it is very much suffused with nostalgia.

The excitement, however, is mingled with sadness. Since 20, we have been riding countless times on the train that took us meandering through mountains between Sichuan and Shaanxi. The route was so well-travelled that we could even outline the shape of rocks alongside the banks of Jialin River by heart. Regrettably, when we revisited this place half a decade later, we were astounded to find that the ancient road of less than 20 km long was greatly shattered. This ancient road, kept and used since the Qin and Han Dynasty, the Three Kingdoms and the many dynasties afterward, was exploded to give ways to a village road! What a pity that we traded a village path over the living testimony of our past. How we messed things up again, and it all happened just less than four years ago....



Great Bend of the Yellow River in Yanchuan, Shaanxi Province. July, 2000

Yellow River
As Seen from the Sky

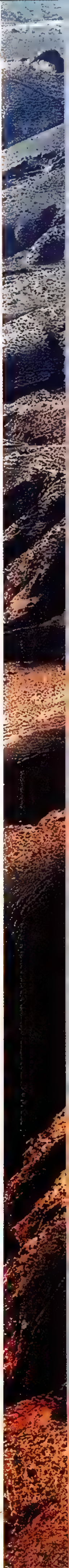
Photos by Hui Huaijie
Article by Yu Lan

The billowing river flows eastward to the sea and does not return. For eons it has flowed to the east ceaselessly.

Qinjin Gorge, Qingjian, Shaanxi Province. 2002

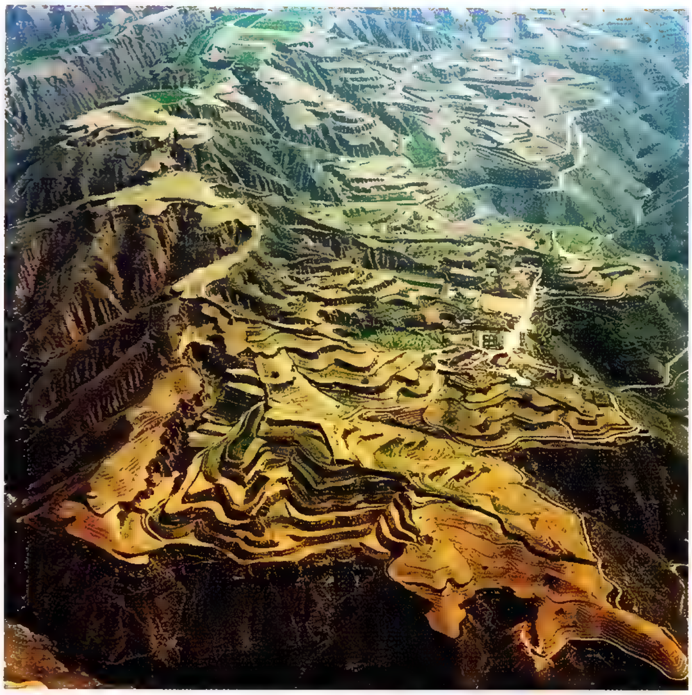
The water gurgles endlessly. It is like a song sung to the mountains, to the forest, as it rolls under the sun. It gushes out in the moonlight. Has ruthless time left any imprint on her? She travels through time in memory. She witnesses changes, sees sadness, happiness, separations and reunion in life. She knows the air in spring is cool, and also how hot summer is. She knows the refreshing autumn wind and the severity of winter cold. The rotation of four seasons is no simple matter. They follow a regulated course and the process changes with each passing day.

Source of the Yellow River in Maduo, Qumalai County, Qinghai Province. August, 2000



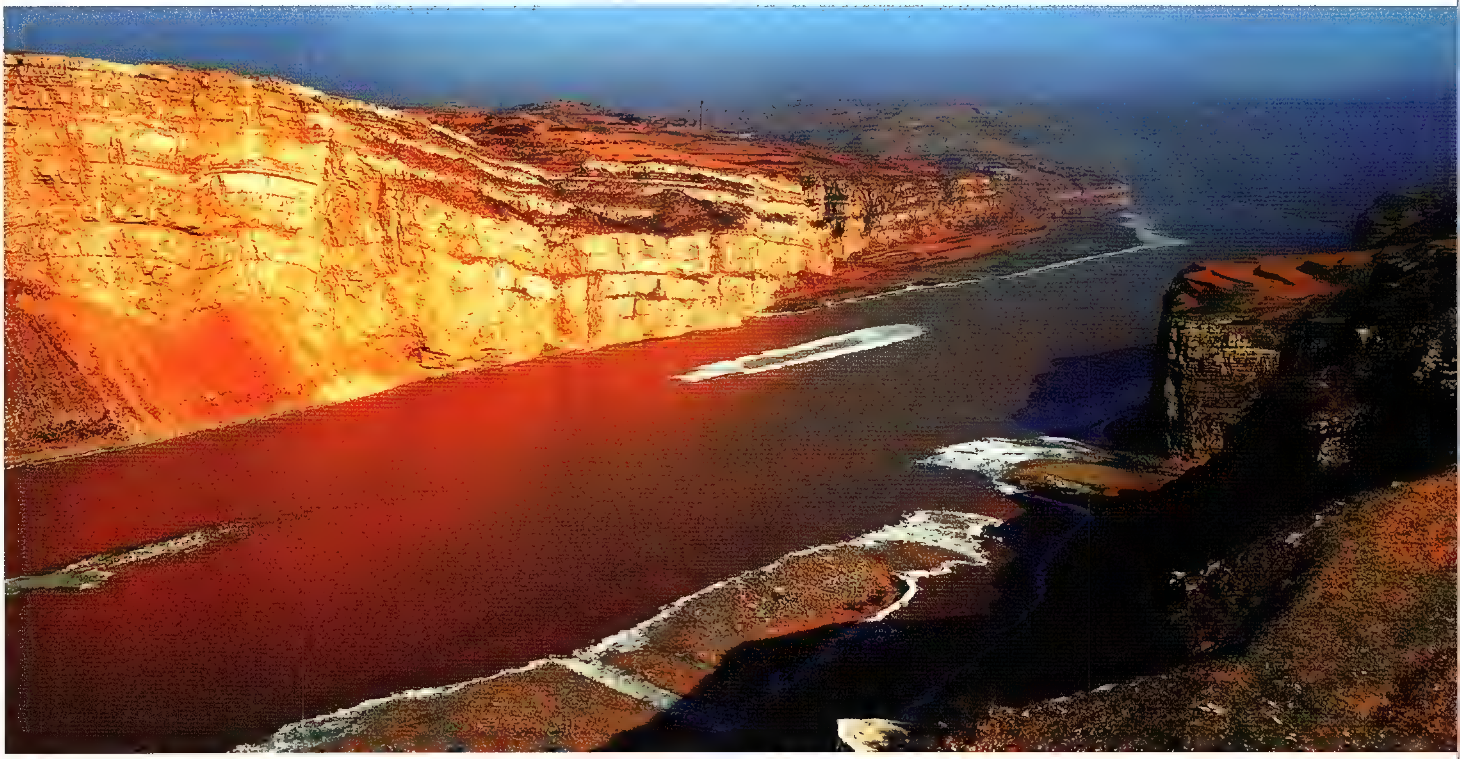
Loess Plateau, Yan'an, Shaanxi Province. January, 2002

The life of the Yellow River is ceaseless



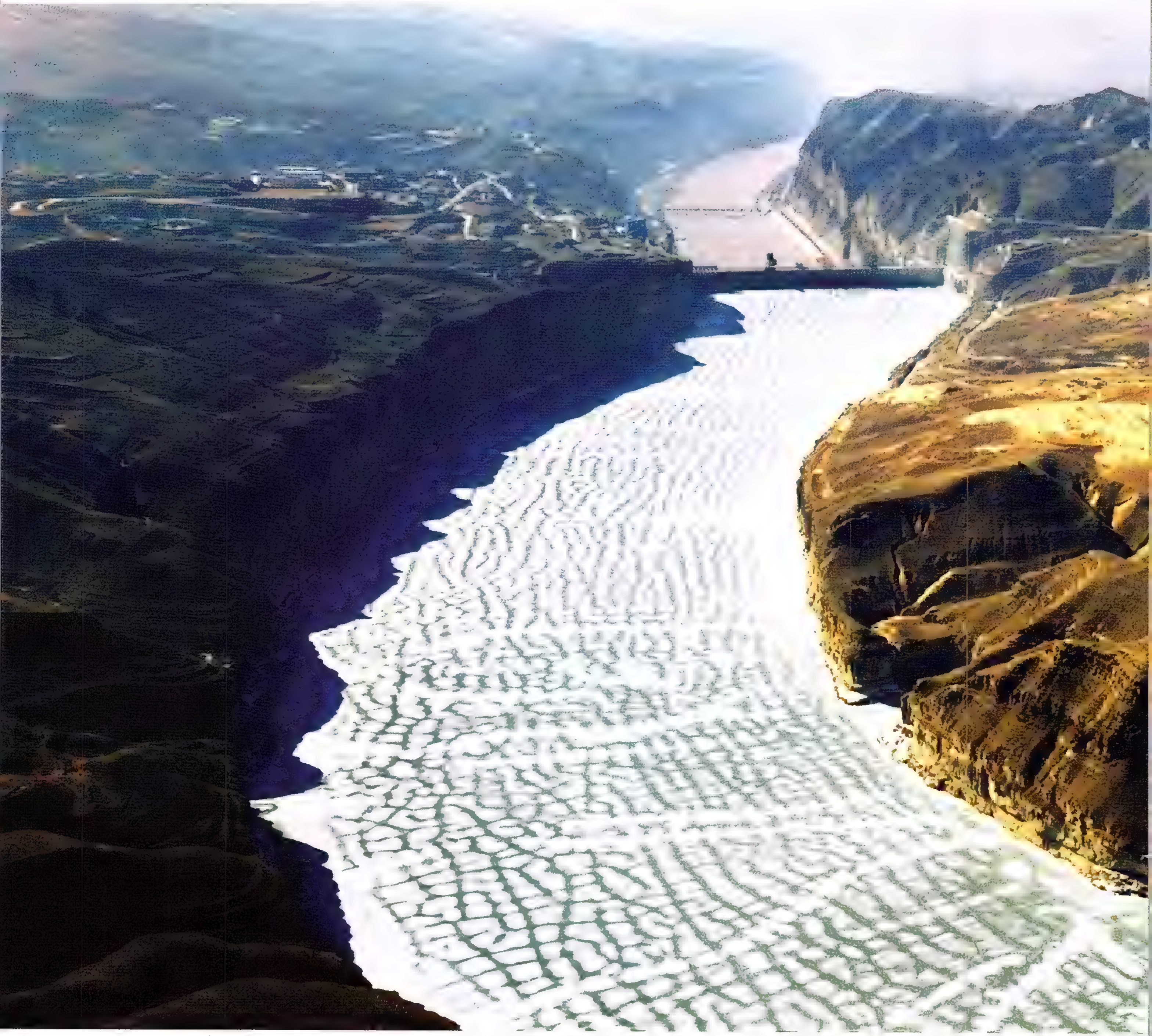
Loess Plateau, Yan'an, Shaanxi Province. May, 2000

Its source — Xingsuhai — flows on and on. The river sometimes roars like an unbridled horse; however, as the water reaches a comfortable and unhurried place, it flows rather silently. Like a sage it contemplates heaven, Earth, the works of God and life. The quiet river thinks of all things around her, but she keeps all the feelings and emotions to herself. The river becomes the cradle of Chinese civilization, a pride that will be with us until the end of time.



Qinjin Gorge, Pianguan County, Shanxi Province. April, 2002

The Plain at the Bend of Yellow River in Baotou, Inner Mongolia. January, 2002

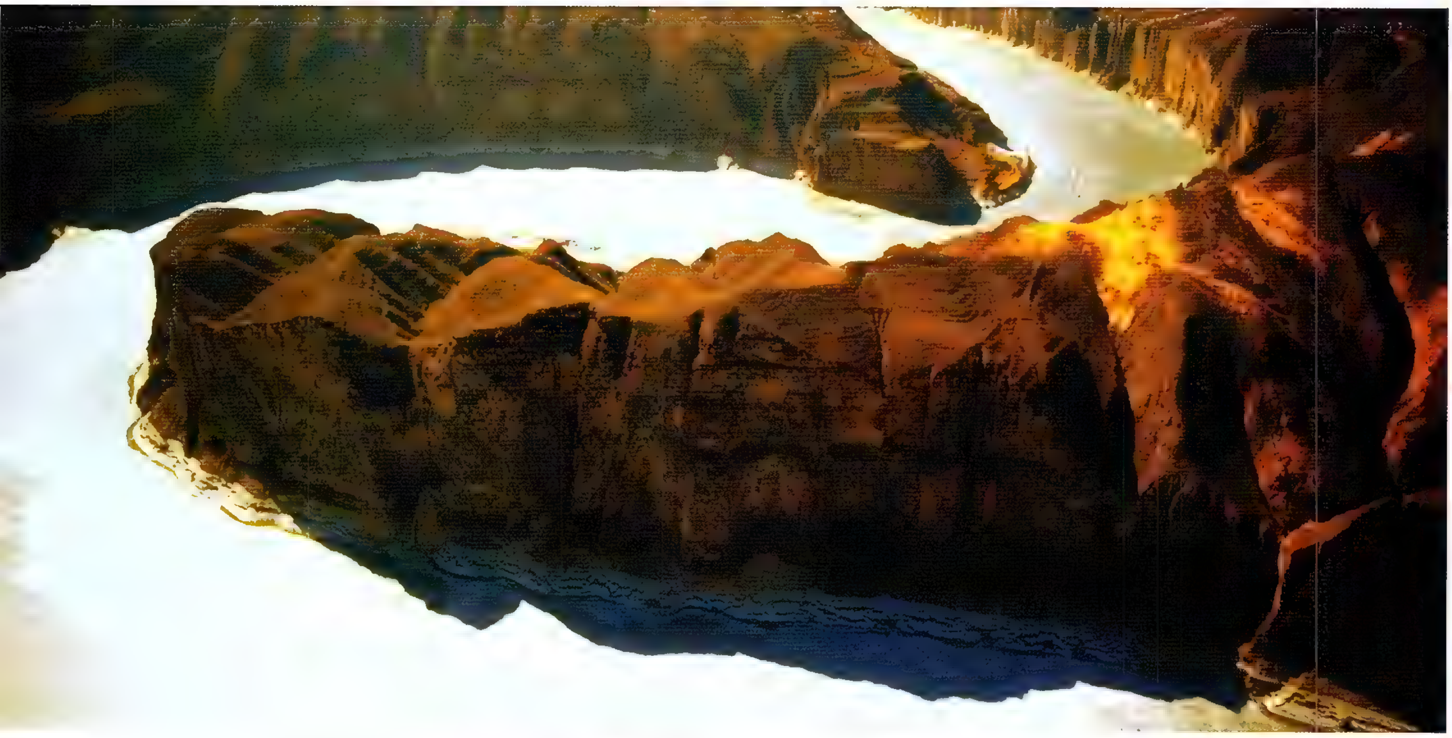


Large Dam on the Yellow River Water Conservancy Key Project, Wanjiazhai, Shanxi Province. March, 2002

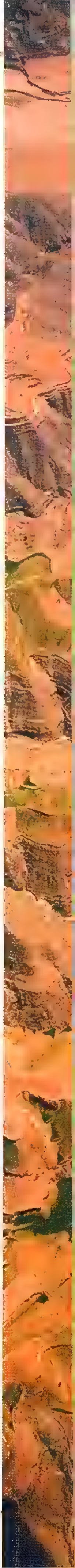
The Yellow River flows on and on without end across Chinese territory

Mouth of Wudinghe River where it joins the Yellow River, between Qingjian, Shaanxi Province and Shilou, Shanxi Province. January, 2002

The water is yellowish and torrential. But in some places it circles in a curve, where the glow becomes serene. Only aerial photography can reveal all her beauty and capture the natural conditions and social customs of the places through which it flows.



Jinmeng Gorge, Zhunge'er Qi, Inner Mongolia. March, 2002



Yanhe River, tributary of the Yellow River in Yanchang County, Shaanxi Province. October, 2002

A Brief Biography of Hui Huaijie

Born in Yan'an, Hui is a professional photographer who devotes himself to capture the scenic beauty of the Loess Plateau. His two photo exhibitions entitled "The Hukou Waterfall of the Yellow River" and "Loess Plateau under Heaven" were held in the Chinese Art Gallery, Beijing, in 1996 and 1997. His works were also featured in a mobile exhibition in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan. From 1999 he began a tour of the Yellow River and completed his new collection of "Aerial Photos of Mother River". He covered over 30,000 km in a three-year trip, obtaining aerial shots that have intoxicated a worldwide audience with the majestic view of the Yellow River.

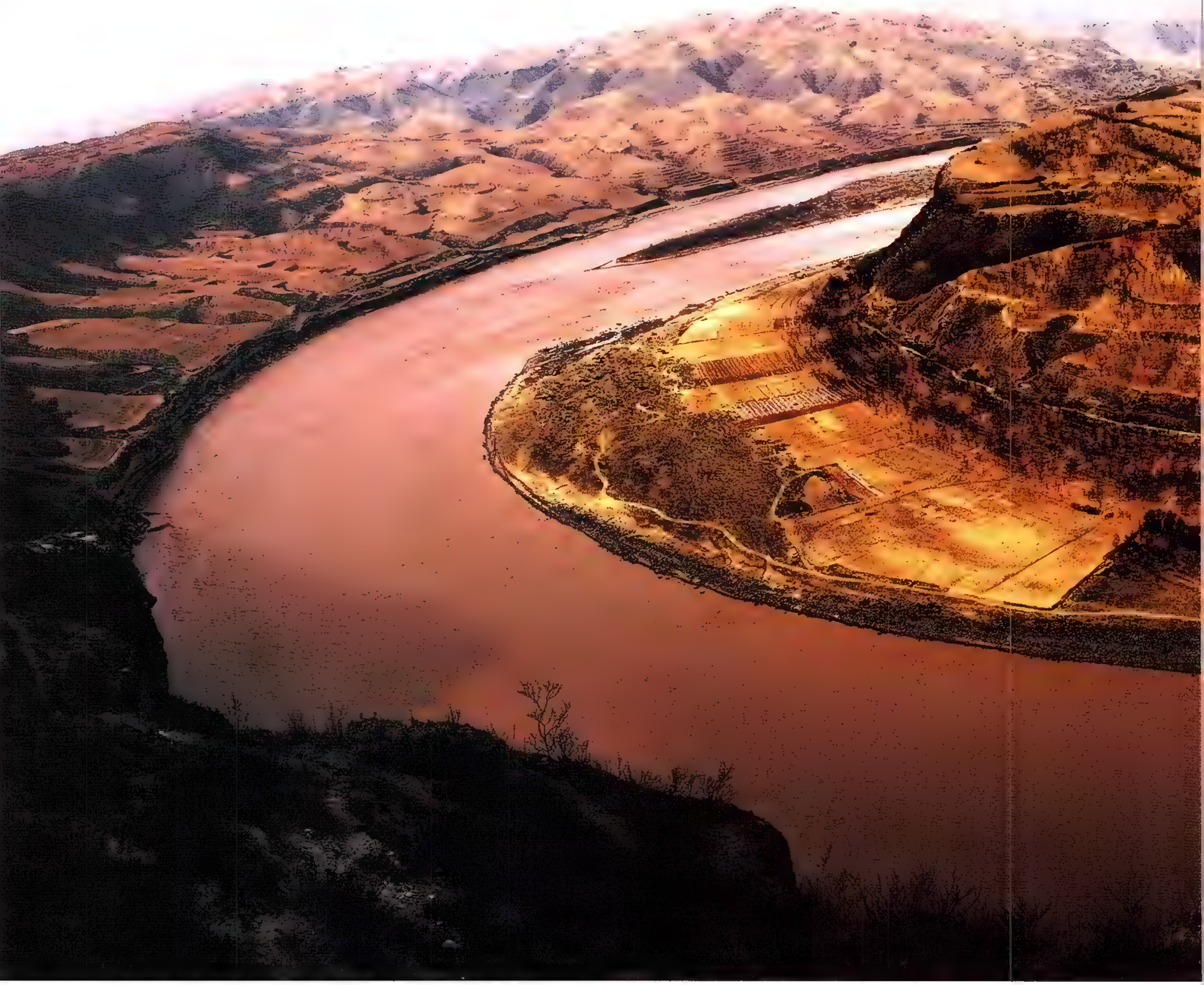
Aerial Photography Anecdotes

Hui used a Yun-5 airplane, an old, primitive and crude plane that was used in the Second World War. This plane wobbled during take-off and swayed and shook during the entire flight. To make matter worse, the cabin door was removed for shooting's convenience; Hui and his assistant had to tie themselves to the plane with ropes around their waists. Since Hui needed to take pictures at about 300 m above ground while the plane travelled at 150 km/hr, rushes of cold strong wind gave him a massive headache and numbing limps.

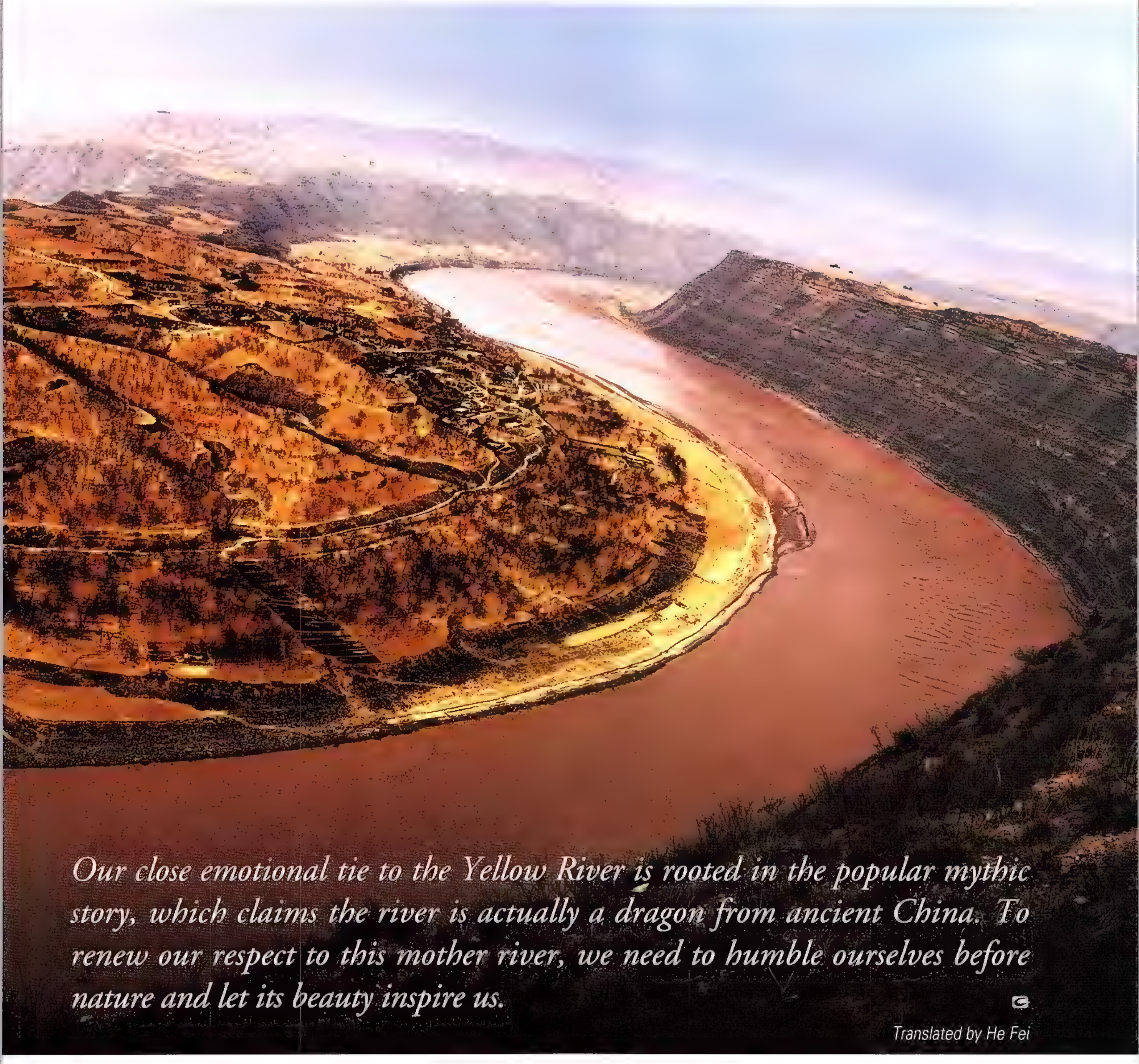
In order to see the Yellow River more closely, Hui did not use any protective glasses and nearly froze his eyeballs. He was a true dare devil — half of his body was dangling in mid-air during shooting so that he could get a better view.

In the summer of 2001, Hui photographed the uninterrupted S-shaped route followed by the Yellow River in Yanshuiguan, northern Shaanxi Province. Flying at a height of over 3,000 m, the temperature reached zero degrees Celsius. Each photographing session lasted up to three hours, leaving Hui's face frozen, eyes sore and limbs stiff. Although it was an incredible hardship, but Hui believed it was more than worthwhile.

Viewing the waters of the Yellow River from the sky opens our imagination. Her majesty is revealed in entirety by the camera.



The Great Bend of the Yellow River in Yanchuan. January, 2002



Our close emotional tie to the Yellow River is rooted in the popular mythic story, which claims the river is actually a dragon from ancient China. To renew our respect to this mother river, we need to humble ourselves before nature and let its beauty inspire us.

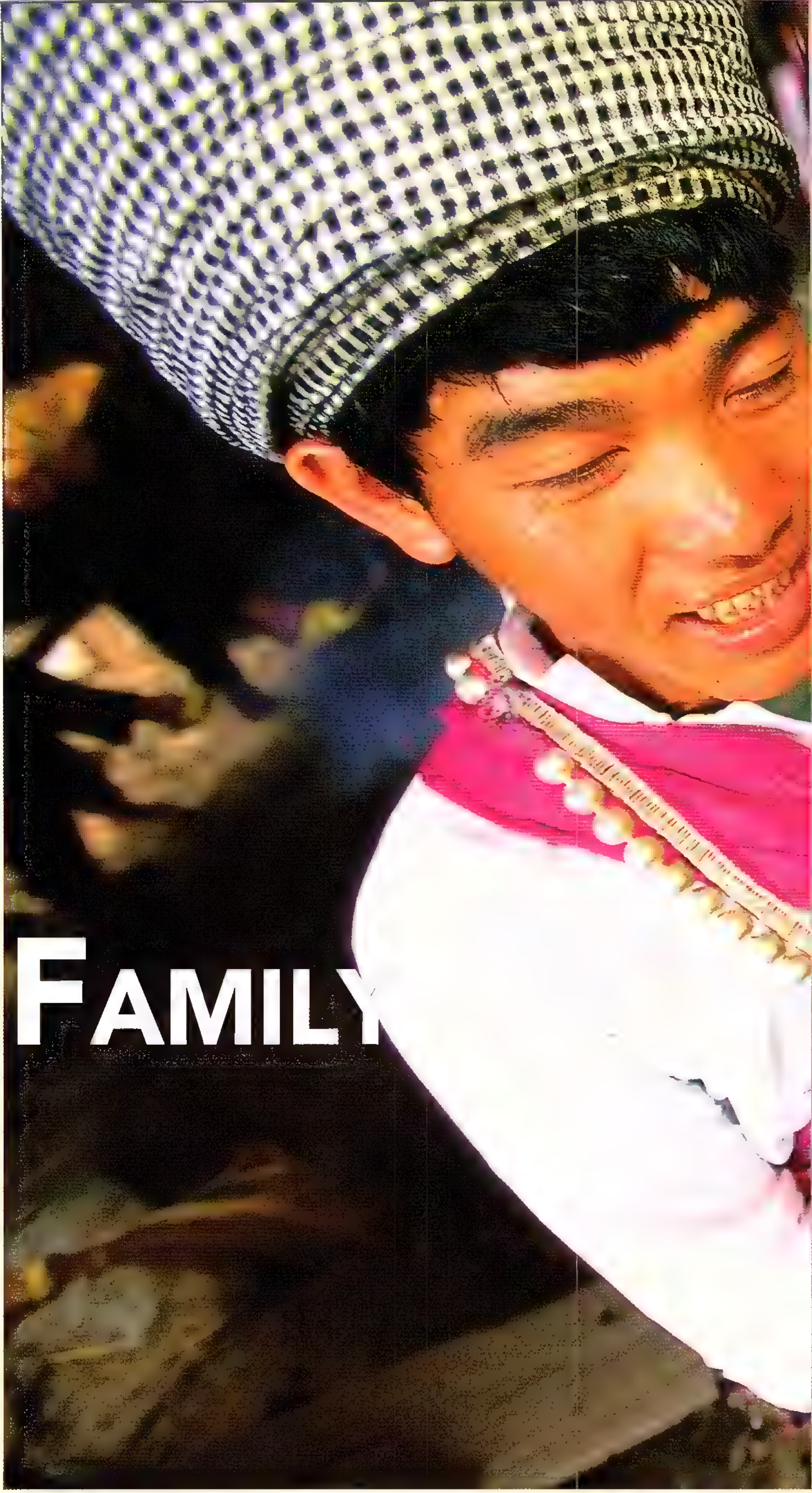
Translated by He Fei

1

THE SECRET OF ANCIENT FAMILY PLANNING

Photos by Lu Xianyi *Article by Zhang Xiaosong*

From time immemorial the people of Zhanli in Guizhou Province have adapted homemade medicinal herbs as birth control. They have contraceptives, herbs for sterilisation, and a kind of "celestial herb" called "Huanhuacao" that can allegedly alter the sex of the fetus. All pharmacists are women, who are bound to keep their medical knowledge they learn from childhood as secret, and they are not allowed to practice until they reach middle age.



In a gully at Congjiang County, Guizhou Province, there is a remote village of the Dong nationality named Zhanli. Since ancient times, the Zhanli people have succeeded in population control using traditional means. There are two surprising records in the village: the rate of natural population growth in Zhanli has been zero since 1949, and the crime rate is almost zero. This is great news for China and most Asian countries, because population control is generally acknowledged as a major problem.

Ever since the mid-1970s, the Chinese government has been devoting major efforts to family planning, attempting to control population growth step by step. The process and enforcement are very difficult.

However, in Zhanli, the villagers started to regulate its population several

decades ago. They established a "folk legislation", which is an effective system of population control and administration that includes forms of birth control, spouse selection, legal marriage age and child rearing. In 1970 the total population in Zhanli was 729. In 1999 there was no increase of households in the village and the total population was 726.

1. **The prescriptions for birth control are strictly confidential to all except a few older women.**
2. **According to the regulations, a Zhanli woman shall not live with her husband after her marriage for three to five years.**
3. **The Dong houses in Zhanli are a variety of suspended buildings in a mountainous area.**

The villagers have never experienced modernisation, pollution or population explosion, and they lead a prosperous and healthy life that is in harmony with nature. Here is the utopia modern people have been dreaming of.

Deities Control Everything under the Sky

Water is the lifeblood of the Zhanli people. In their eyes, wells are the shrine and origin of life. The small village has eight wells, the oldest of which was dug several decades ago.

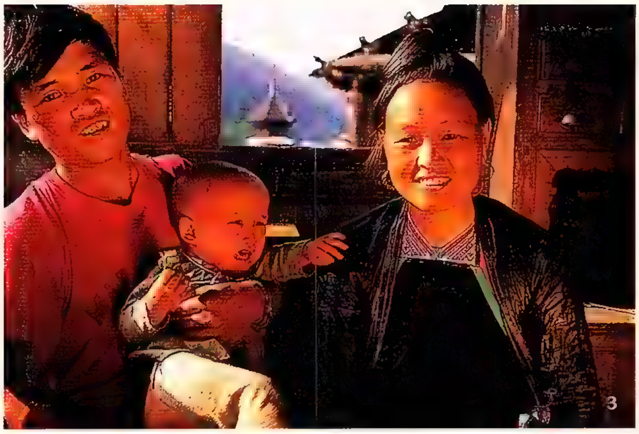
Where there is water, there are trees. The Zhanli villagers believe that all things on earth and heaven, from mountains and rivers to a single tree or a blade of grass, are connected to deities. In view of this, they do not cut trees at will, because mountains are deities; they would not dare to chisel rocks on mountains and risk bringing disaster to the village, because rocks are also deities. The villagers believe that reverence is the starting point of protection. They protect their living environment. Every year right after New Year's Day, their first job is planting trees on the mountains before farming. Whenever a baby is born, they plant some trees to mark the event. These are locally known as "maiden firs", indicating that the trees will accompany the child through its life. Year in and year out, grasslands decrease because of the growth of forests. As the percentage of forest cover is as high as 75 percent, herders have to drive their cattle to the bush.

The Zhanli people believe that nature and deities are in unison and their interaction decides the fate of humans. Under the control of this combined force, humankind must venerate them and live harmoniously with them to gain the right of life and the opportunity of regeneration. Therefore, like other Dong people, the Zhanli villagers also adapt themselves to nature, not the other way arourd.

Staying Away from Husband's House to Avoid Early Pregnancy

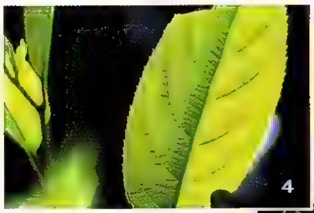
Tradition has it that the ancestors of Zhanli took "Wu" from the Han people as their surname. The younger generations set up their families and soon generated into 60 households known as the "60 Zhanlis". In view of the large increase of population, Wu Gongli, a well-respected leader, worried that due to the deficiency of food and clothing, famine and robbery would ruin rife. If things continued this way, the land would no longer support the Zhanli people.

He then made rules for the village: a couple that owned a 2,500-kg-yield paddy field can have two children and those who had a 1,500-kg-yield field could have only one child. Like this, the Zhanli people were



able to preserve equal property inheritance rights between the sexes.

In Zhanli, all children have the right of property inheritance: "Girls inherit cotton fields and boys paddy fields". Parents give their daughter a "maiden field", a dowry for her marriage. If parents marry off their daughter without her dowry, they would be regarded as a disgrace and the fiancée could break off the engagement. Moreover, the right of property inheritance stipulates that the son and the daughter share the property of the mountain forest and vegetable garden equally. The boy inherits cattle and the girl all the gold and silver ornaments and cloth that she may take with her to her husband's house.



Young people can socialize freely in the village, and they can marry young. However, the bride cannot stay at her husband's house on the marriage night. She must stay three days at someone else's house. Afterwards she goes back to her parents' and stays there for three to five years. She only goes back to her husband's house to give a hand during busy farming seasons or when the family needs her help on some important occasions. The girl goes back to her parents-in-law's house only when she gets older. Consequently, early marriage does not lead to early pregnancy. The average childbearing age of Zhanli women is over 22. When the parents are getting old, the daughter looks after her mother and the son his father. In case the family does not have a son, the inheritor of the property takes the responsibility. Therefore, the equality between sexes is maintained.

"Huanhuacao Herb" Helps Alter the Sex of the Fetus

The understanding of interdependence between humans and nature gives the Zhanli people their special insights of life.

Since they adhere to eugenics and low birth rate, the villagers pay great attention to birth celebration. When a baby is born, the host of the household will hold a grand ceremony. He kills a big ox, a fat pig and four chickens, and prepares two fish and two eggs to entertain the whole village.

Many villagers live a very long life due to the good environment. A family with four or five generations living under the same roof is common in Zhanli. As each family has only one son and one daughter, after the daughter marries, each generation has only one son left at home. With just a few members in each family, there is less conflict and family problem. Grandpa Wu is 90 years old this year, and in his five-generation family, there are only eight members. His youngest grandson is just one year old and there is a gap of nearly 90 years between grandfather and grandson.

The younger generations have benefited from the strict population control. They have plenty of land and space for continuous development. Today in Zhanli, there is one tenth hectare of fertile farmland per capita, double the national average. Their annual grain

1. Special racks with ears of glutinous paddy drying create a magnificent view.
2. Breeding fish in the paddy field is a tradition handed down from their forebears. When they transplant seedlings in spring, they put fry into the paddy fields at the same time.
3. The Zhanli people have a theory of population control.
4. Villagers use homemade medicinal herbs in birth control. They have contraceptives as well as drugs for sterilisation. It is said that they even have a kind of herb called "Huanhuacao" for altering the sex of a baby.
5. 72-year-old Granny Wu Naigen is the last generation of pharmacists in Zhanli.

supply is around 350 kg per capita. An ordinary household can obtain two years' grain from each year's harvest. With sufficient farmland, the villagers use more land to grow low-yield but tasty and nutritious glutinous rice.

Zhanli's traditional population control has a complete set of medical and surgical treatments, which include homemade medicinal herbs for contraception, sex alteration, abortion and recuperation after childbirth. There are contraceptives available for both sexes and if a family already has two children, and the couple take the contraceptives voluntarily. According to the old folks, one dose of the contraceptive is effective for life. However, pharmacists can reverse the effect and stop the medical effect of the contraceptives with other kinds of herb. The prescription is strictly confidential. No Zhanli villager knows the secret, except for a few older women.

2

Pharmacists Handle Reproduction Problems

All pharmacists are women. They learn their medical skills from childhood, but not until they are above middle age can they put their skills to use. They hand down the prescriptions generation to generation from mother to daughter. If a pharmacist's daughter dies young, or if she cannot receive her inheritance due to some other reason, the pharmacist selects one of her cousins as the inheritor. The prescriptions are passed down only within a clan.

Granny Wu Naigen, 72, who enjoys high prestige, is the last generation of the pharmacists. She has induced 40 abortions and handed out contraceptive using the ancient secret skills without a single accident. Enjoying great popularity, she enjoys helping others and women often ask her for help.

1

In Zhanli, 90 percent of families have one son and one daughter. The success of the contraceptive and sex alteration is surprising, and so far no scientist has researched on this subject.

"Granny Wu, where do you get this Huanhuacao herb?"

"From my aunt. She was able to make it. Now that she has passed away, this medicine has also gone with her. Nobody else knows it, or the effect of it."

"Now what do you do to decide the sex of a baby before it is born?

"I don't know. Usually we get one boy and one girl in a family, just following the course of nature."

"Do you mean what the pharmacists do now is suppling women with drugs to induce abortion?"

"Right. What has been handed down to us are only drugs for these purposes. Only women can inherit them. Now there are a few old grannies who know how to use them, but no young women."

The pharmacists also act as midwives. In Zhanli, no woman dies in childbirth. In the village they have an average of four to five births a year and almost the same number of natural death. Since ancient times the population growth in the village has remained at zero. Now that a national family planning policy is in place, the medicines issued by the government are better and the forms of treatment simpler. Family planning has become safer. The

Zhanli pharmacists no longer employ the local form of induced abortion. Unfortunately there are few successors to take over Wu Naigen's ancient secret prescriptions.

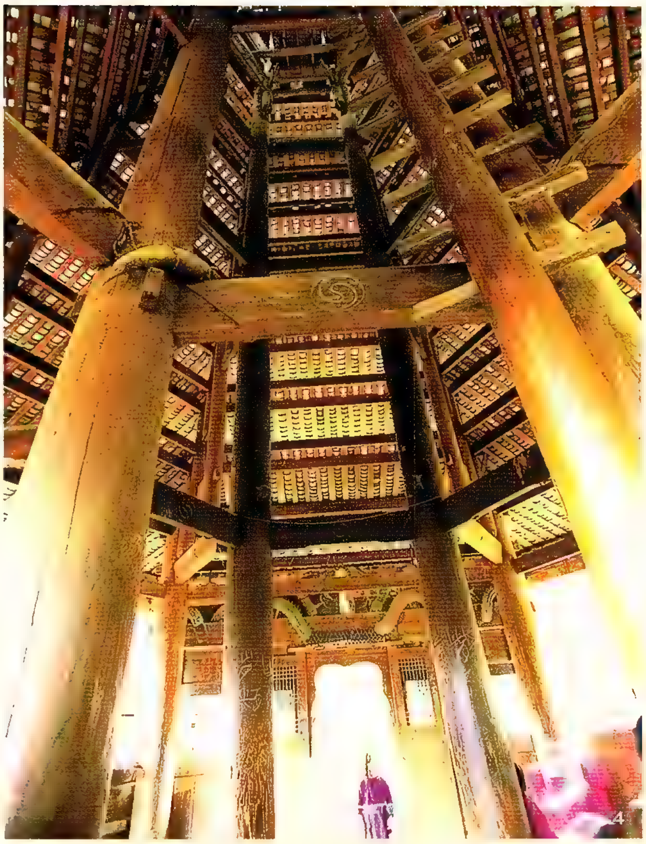
Built on a gentle slope, Zhanli Village faces west. Standing to the right of a stream all the houses in the village also face west, indicating that the whole village works together with one heart and one mind. So far, not a single household has built a house on the opposite side of the stream. If anyone did, the family would be regarded as antagonistic to the whole village.

In the centre of the village looms a large wooden tower – the Drum Tower. As the symbol of law, tradition, religion and the will of the Dong people, it is an important building. The ancestors of Zhanli gathered here to make rules, drink wine and swear oaths for safeguarding the village. Now in the same tower the elders lead the villagers to plan administrative regulations, to discuss problems and mediate disputes. The Drum Tower is also the stage for story telling, singing, enjoying moonlit nights and a site for young people to court.

An agreement made on the tower becomes local law. It has been a forum to settle disputes since the times of their ancestors. Zhanli is a very safe village and since 1949, not a single crime has occurred in the village. The only exception was when a man caught red-handed stealing someone's cloth. The villagers killed his ox and shared the meat, took away his grain pots and pulled down his house. They imposed a fine of 60 kg of wine, rice and meat. The local regulations are very severed to deter crimes.

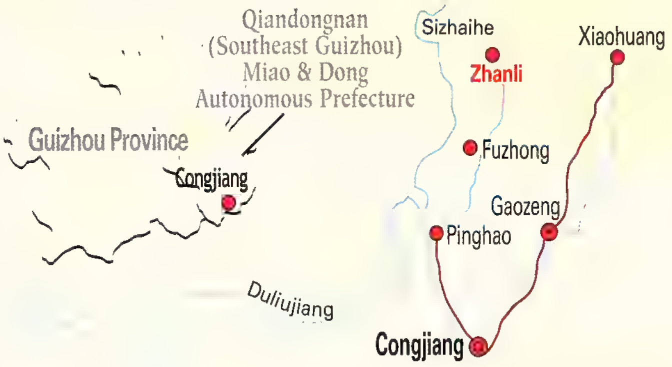
The traditions, beliefs and regulations have formed a powerful force that keeps society in perfect order. It is this traditional and indigenous force that has helped Zhanli villagers undergo the course of civilisation for hundreds of years and retain their ancient system of reproduction. With the wisdom of their ancestors they have made important contributions to China in the increasingly grim situation of the population problem.

Translated by Anju K.



Tips for Travellers

One of the villages under the administration of Gaozeng Township, Congjiang County, Zhanli lies deep in the mountains and is difficult to reach. Visitors can take a bus for about eight kilometres from Congjiang to the Sizhaihe Dam at Duliujiang River. From there it takes about 40 minutes by boat going upstream a tributary to the mountains. Next, visitors have to continue their journey on foot for two to three hours before reaching the village. There is no decent road, just mountain paths for cattle. Since it has a limited number of lodgings, visitors have the choice of staying with the local people or returning to the county seat the same day.



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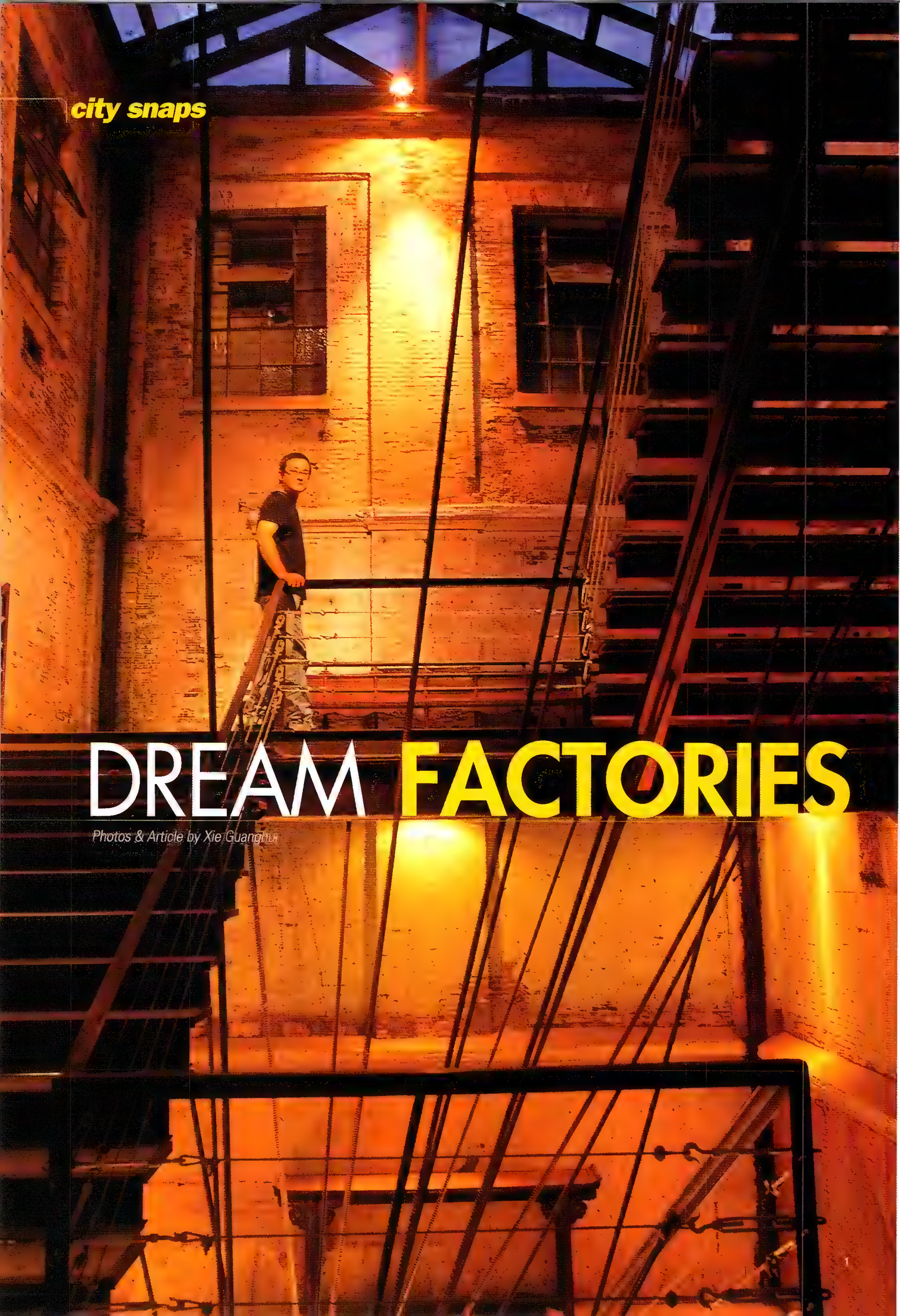
1. Today, Zhanli still retains the ancient lifestyle of men tilling land and women weaving cloth. Some of the main jobs for women are planting cotton, spinning, weaving and making clothes. They use homemade indigo as dye. All the villagers, regardless of age or sex, wear clothes made of homespun pure cotton cloth.
2. Young people enjoy free socializing in the village and they are allowed to marry young. However, the couples cannot live together before adulthood. As a result, the average childbearing age of Zhanli women is over 22.
3. Children in the village must undergo a rite at the Bell Tower and be named before they step into adulthood and formally become one of the Dongs.
4. The Bell Tower is a symbol of religion. The drum in the tower can be used only by the head of the clan. He climbs a wooden ladder to the top of the building and beats the big drum to call the villagers to assemble.



DREAM FACTORIES

Photos & Article by Xie Guanghui

The new information industrial has brought many multi-national companies with advanced technologies and funding to Shanghai. Traditional manufacturing is gradually phasing out, and many small and medium size government funded enterprises, have been closed down. As a result, a lot of vacant old factory warehouses are out in the market for cheap renting. And this has led to the beginning of "Soho District" in Shanghai.

The large, airy spaces of warehouses make ideal studios for artists, with room enough to express themselves and fire their imaginations. These warehouses have also become fashionable residences for young people, and sound property investments for the new moneyed middle classes.

A New Community

Taikang Road is too minor to feature on the maps of Shanghai. Unable to locate it myself, I had to rely on local taxi-drivers to take me there. Just past the Tianzi Archway, the streets are only three of four metres wide. The factories on each side were originally built by the Japanese. After the Liberation, these buildings were then occupied as the food processing machinery manufacturers for a long time, only deserted a few years ago when fierce market competition drove them out of business.

The first artist who settled here was Chen Yifei. In 1999, he remodeled several old workshops into three studios for pottery, oil painting and photography. Chen had been inspired to convert the warehouses after seeing the studios of Soho when he had lived in New York.

Yifei Pottery Studio combines Chen's artistic designs with the master

1. **The huge warehouse at 1247 South Suzhouhe Rd, is the studio of Wang Xianchi's advertising company.**
2. **At the Yifei Pottery Studio, on Taikang Road, works are created by master craftsmen from Jingdezhen.**
3. **The Shanghai Food Processing Machinery Manufacturer is now home to many international artists.**
4. **A grain warehouse of 60 years ago is now Deng Kunyan's studio.**

王劼音画室
Wang Je yin studio
314室
COSMOS DESIGN
萬荷藝術
211-213室
PRESTIGE technologies
jooi
設計室
217室
Chinese Kung Fu Centre
3

Warehouse Art History

The end of the Second World War brought a much longed-for peace, but also the closure of weapons and military products factories. Factories, workshops and warehouses were all deserted. In the 1950s, artists who struggled with reality and penury, fell on hard times. These intellectuals, talented but penniless, had to face the darker side of life. Some had escaped from war to find deserted warehouses in New York's Greenwich Village, Manhattan, and Soho districts. These bare, cold warehouses were inexpensive to rent. The industrial surroundings provided the perfect background for their pioneering ideas.

Deng Kunyan Deng was a famed architect in the 1970s in Taiwan. His successful designs for coffee shops were innovative examples of interior decoration in the food business. Their modern style is still unique and novel in Taiwan. In the 1980s, Deng became the leading Taiwanese architect. Not only has he won many designing awards and honours, he was also voted as the "The most Eligible Bachelor". In 1997, he established his studio in a rundown warehouse by the Suzhou River. Once again he attracted the attention of the international media. He can take credit for the Suzhou River being compared to the Soho District of New York.

craftsmanship of workers from Jingdezhen. Equipped with modern appliances such as electric kiln, this studio is open to visitors. However, the slow and arduous process of cast-making is still done by hand, and one glazing can take up to 15 days. Although art should be priceless, Chen's works often come with expensive price tags.

A World of Inspiration

Chen Yifei's neighbour is E Dongqiang Engraving Centre, occupying a five-storey building, which is also used to be part of the food processing machinery manufacturers. The foyer has a shining crane arm that hangs from the ceiling, obviously an artistic touch more than an industrial relic. The wide staircase winds all the way up. The fifth floor is huge, covering 4,500 m², and it is divided into different workstations for its international artists: photographer from Canada, painter from Singapore and designers from Denmark, United States, France and Australia. They design, manufacture, showcase and sell their work here, adding to the charm of the street.

Beginning of the Transformation

Old warehouses of the 1920s to 1930s line both sides of the Suzhou River. One such warehouse at 1305 Suzhouhe Road is the huge studio of Deng Kunyan. As one of the 15 million residents of the crowded Shanghai, I have long been accustomed to cramped spaces, and therefore could not help but impressed by this vast area with high ceiling. The floor space covered about 2,000 m². In the beginning, this place was a grain warehouse that belonged to the head of a former Shanghainese underworld gang. Who would have guessed that this battered warehouse is now transformed into the gene pool for world talents?

Just like the architects in Soho District,

Deng Kunyan of Taiwan hoped to acquire a big warehouse studio in an urban area. "I came here by chance," he said. "I planned to live in Europe before, but then the two sides of the Taiwan Strait opened their shipping channels in 1992, so I came to Shanghai instead. I was just going to stay for a short while for fun, but this city fascinated me and made me stayed." He looked over his studio. "This was originally a fruit wholesale market. Its second and third floors were partitioned. On the balconies and the roof, illegal rooms had been built to house over a hundred migrant rural workers. They made a lot of noise, hung their laundry in the open and left garbage on the floor. It was a real eyesore before."

Reclaiming History

After removing the junk, the remodelling began. Deng paved the ground, installed a big skylight to let natural light into the room. He cleaned the ground and ceiling thoroughly, so the old brick-wood structure shone in the sunshine. Deng said, "Maintaining the original look is the best way to preserve history. My job is to remove anything forced on to it, things that sabotage the original look."

When Deng's studio was completed it attracted a lot of publicity in Taiwan and aroused interest among Shanghainese architects. His studio became so popular in the eyes of Shanghainese media that even the officials of Shanghai Cultural Bureau had to pay a visit. Thanks to this studio at 1350, the change in Shanghai city planning preserved the warehouses along the Suzhou River.

Deng was a pioneer of the Suzhou River warehouse arts scene. He called for the preservation of the riverbanks and for the development of a cultural centre to rival Soho District. Afterall, Shanghai has the unmatched vantage of space: Soho District is merely a square block, but Suzhou River has a belt of warehouses. Deng's vision was inspired when he recognized the advantage Shanghai had over Soho.

Translated by Li Guoqing

1. Deng Kunyan has a large architecture studio on South Suzhou Road.
2. The converted warehouses provide a sense of space and freedom in a crowded city.

About E Dongqiang In the last 15 years, E made a series of photographs, including "Last Glimpse, Western Buildings in Shanghai", "French Settlement in Shanghai", "A God-blessed Country, Western Religious Buildings in China" and "Ports of Trade in Modern China." All these were incorporated into a large album, "The Receding Empire". Towards the end of the 19th Century, Western civilizations forced open the gates of this ancient empire. This clash brought in urban cultures from alien countries. Towards the end of the 20th Century, Western civilization came back, but this time, it came in the form of trade and investment. The East almost willingly submitted itself to the embrace of globalization. However, in a new round of self-negation and destruction, many historic Western-style buildings disappeared in the process of urbanization and modernization.

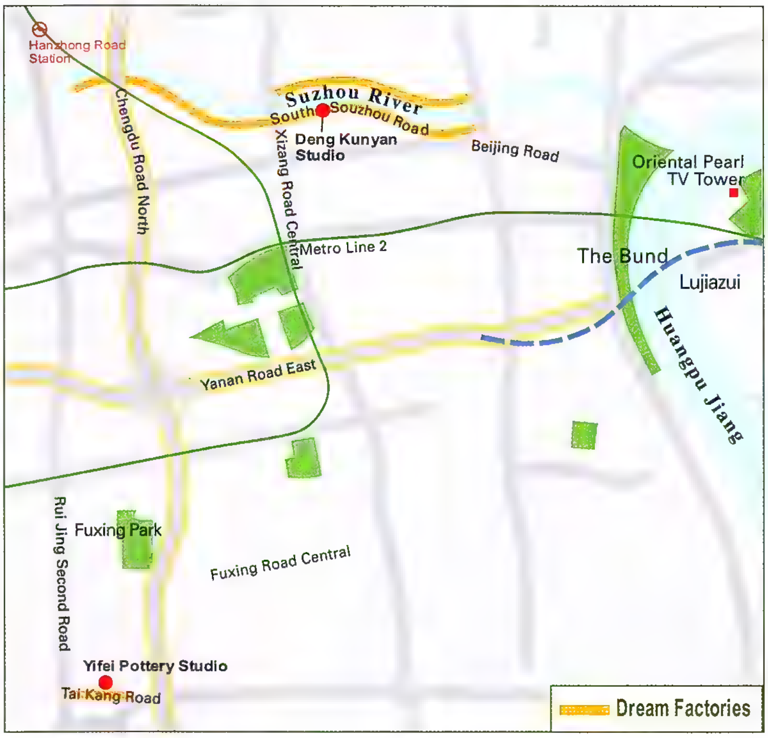
E Dongqiang has faithfully documented this clash, with its mergers and changes. He reminds us that we should be aware of China's unique culture and history while we are merrily rushing towards globalization.

Chen Yifei A graduate of Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, he received his MA in art from Hunter College, New York. His works have won awards in China and been exhibited in Japan, France and Germany. Some have been collected by major Chinese museums.

His works were displayed at the New York International Exhibition, the New England Modern Art Center, the Smith Art Museum and the Brooklyn Museum. He has held six personal exhibitions in Washington and at the Hammer Gallery, New York. In 1989 and 1990, he held even more personal exhibitions in Japan. As an honorary guest, he attended the Hong Kong International Art Fair, where he held a retrospective exhibition.

His works have sold at Christies, Sotheby's, and at auctions in New York and Hong Kong. He holds the record for the highest paid contemporary Chinese artist. Chen is also the first contracted Asian artist in the history of the Marlborough Gallery.

Chen has founded Yifei Group, incorporating fashion, films, advertising, the Internet, decoration and model brokerage.



ZHUHAI'S SEAFOOD

Photos and Article by Fen Duobei

Baige Fish with Black Bean Sauce

Zhuhai, near Hong Kong, Macao and Shenzhen, attracts tourists from other parts of the country all the year round because of its delicious cuisines.

Tasting Shrimps and Crabs in Doumen

Out of the four delicacies of Zhuhai, Wushan thick-shell crabs are the most famous because of their rich meat and aromatic smell.

Located at Jing'an in Doumen, the Yili Restaurant is renowned for its thick-shell crab dishes. Its house specialities—thick-shell crabs prepared according to a secret recipe, and baige fish with black bean sauce—are among the 10 most famous dishes in Zhuhai City. To prepare the former dish, the chef first cleans the crabs, cuts every crab into four pieces, and steams them. After the crabs are ready, customers dip the pieces into a sauce prepared according to a time-honored secret recipe. The baige fish is cooked in an earthenware pot, and then black bean sauce is added, resulting in tender and tasty fish.

蝶恋花咖啡店
Butterfly Love Flower Coffee Shop

Die Lian Hua (Butterfly Love Flower) Coffee Shop

Doumen Thick-shell Crabs

After trying some seafood, I came to a cafe called "Di Lian Hua". Outside the cafe, a poster with large print of "A cooked pigeon for 15 yuan*" caught my attention.

Since it was so cheap, I thought I would give it a try. I was happy to find the young pigeons were the most delicious food I had tasted during the trip. The meat was soft, tender and tasty. The pigeons are preserved in nearly 100 different spices before cooking.

Despite being called a cafe, it is really a restaurant which serves all kinds of coffee, as well as various dishes. I ordered Blue Mountain Coffee (20 yuan) and baked meat prepared to an ancient recipe (138 yuan). The food I ordered was enough for two people, and only cost about 150 yuan.

Ji Wei Shrimps with Goose Liver Sauce

Normally shrimps are simply boiled in water, or steamed with salt or spices. However Shunye Restaurant in Jing'an, Doumen, prepares Ji Wei shrimps with the fusion cuisine of Chinese and Western, creating a dish known as Ji Wei shrimps with goose liver sauce. The goose liver sauce is prepared by Shunye Restaurant itself.

*** US $1 ~ 8 yuan**

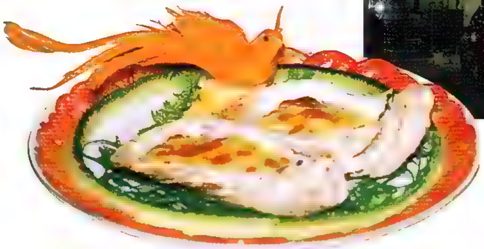
Wanzi Seafood Street

Like Lei Yu Men Seafood Bazaar in Hong Kong, Wanzi Seafood Street in Zhuhai is the best place for tourists to try various kinds of seafood.

Eating an oyster usually costs several dozen yuan at any restaurant in Hong Kong. However oysters are much cheaper in Zhuhai. I ordered two fat oysters at Yang Ji Seafood Restaurant in Wanzi Seafood Street, and asked the chef to steam them with cheese. The restaurant only charged me eight yuan for a large oyster, and it was delicious.

Wanzi Fishermen's Wharf restaurant is close to Wanzi Seafood Street. It also serves seafood, but its decor is very unusual. Wu Guiping, the boss, loves photography and he hangs all sorts of fishing pictures on the walls of the corridors and staircase corners, adding an artistic atmosphere. The restaurant serves special dishes such as "evening song of the fishing boat". A fish is served in a wooden boat, creating a strong fishing-port environment.

Wanzi Fishermen's Wharf


The Oysters Streamed with Cheese

The Cuisines of Other Provinces in Gongbei

In the commercial area of Gongbei, I found a restaurant that serves a famous dish — Guizhou Bamboo Shoots and Chicken. The raw materials for preparing the dish are unusual — black chickens raised by the ethnic minority people in the mountain areas in Guizhou, and bamboo shoots from the mountains in Chishui, Guizhou. The preparation of the dish also requires 60 Chinese traditional medicines. So this dish is not only tasty, but also good for the health. Guizhou Bamboo Shoots and Chicken costs about 60 yuan per kilogram.

Eating some preserved red and green peppers from West Hunan before the meal will whet your appetite. If you pulverize the preserved peppers and mix them with a big fish head, you will have a delicious meal. I strongly recommend the following dish to any tourists to Zhuhai: large fish head in red and green (118 yuan).

China Delicacy City in the Zhuhai Port Square gathers a large number of restaurants serving all kinds of food from various regions including Sichuan, Anhui, Guangdong, Mongolia and Xinjiang. All tourists will find something to suit their tastes here.

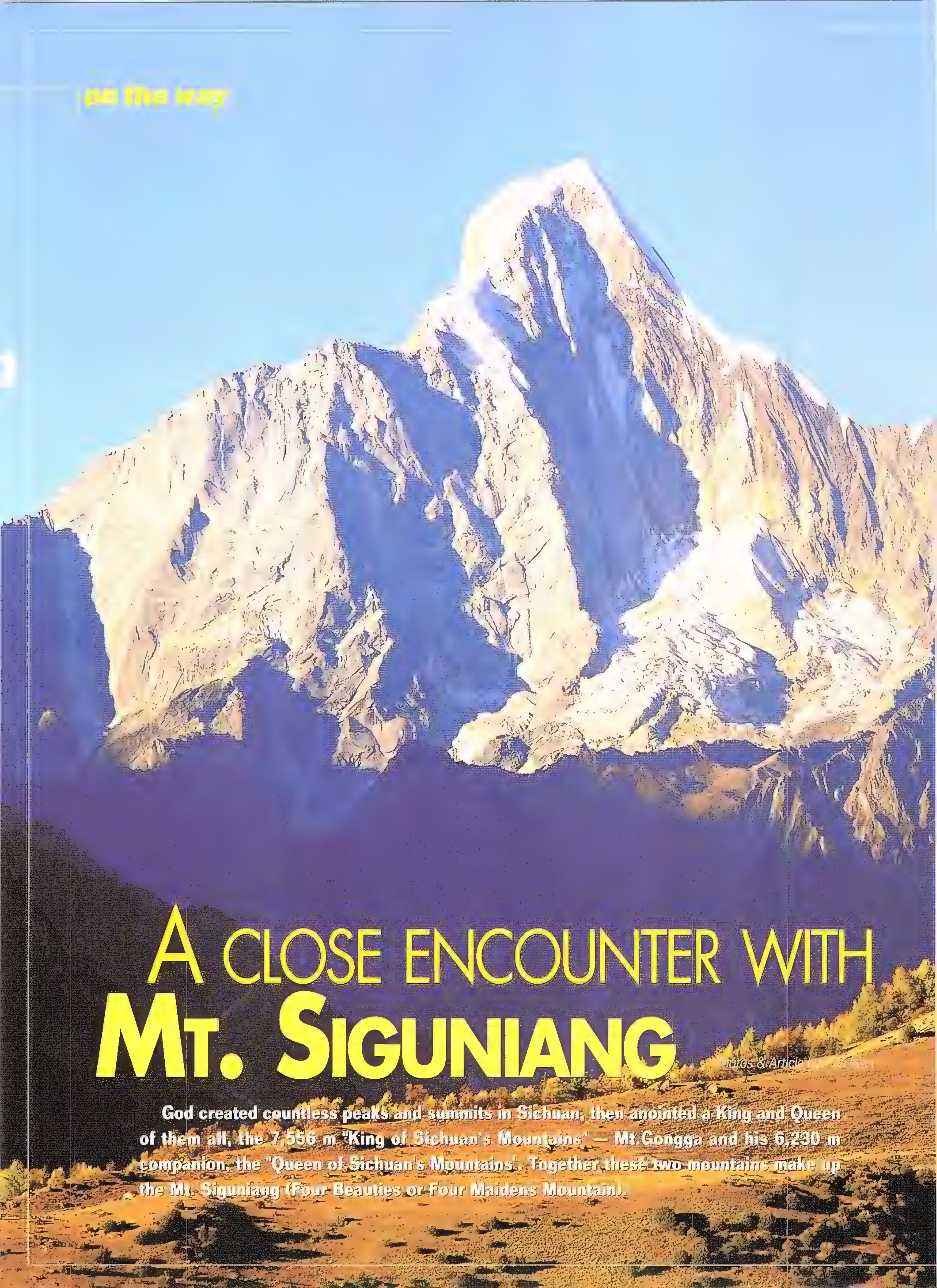
Translated by Kuang Peihua

Fish Head with Preserved Red and Green Peppers

RESTAURANTS

Yili Restaurant
Address: On the western side of Jianfeng Bridge, Jing'an, Doumen, Zhuhai
Tel: (756) 5530168
Die Lian Hua Cafe
Address: 52-56 Zhongxing Beilu, Jing'an, Doumen, Zhuhai
Tel: (756) 5555771
The Yang Ji Seafood Restaurant
Address: C23-27 Wanzi Seafood Street, Zhuhai
Tel: (756) 8822911
Wanzi Fishermen's Wharf
Address: 3013 Wanzi Nanwan Nanlu, Zhuhai
Tel: (756) 8822888
Guizhou Bamboo Shoots and Chicken
Address: Lian'an Road (facing the Gongbei Middle School), Gongbei, Zhuhai
Tel: (756) 8283268
Chinese Restaurant in Huajun Hotel
Address: Qiaoguang Xilu, Gongbei, Zhuhai
Tel: (756) 8118999
China Delicacy City
Address: B Zone, Zhuhai Port Square
Tel: (756) 8280280

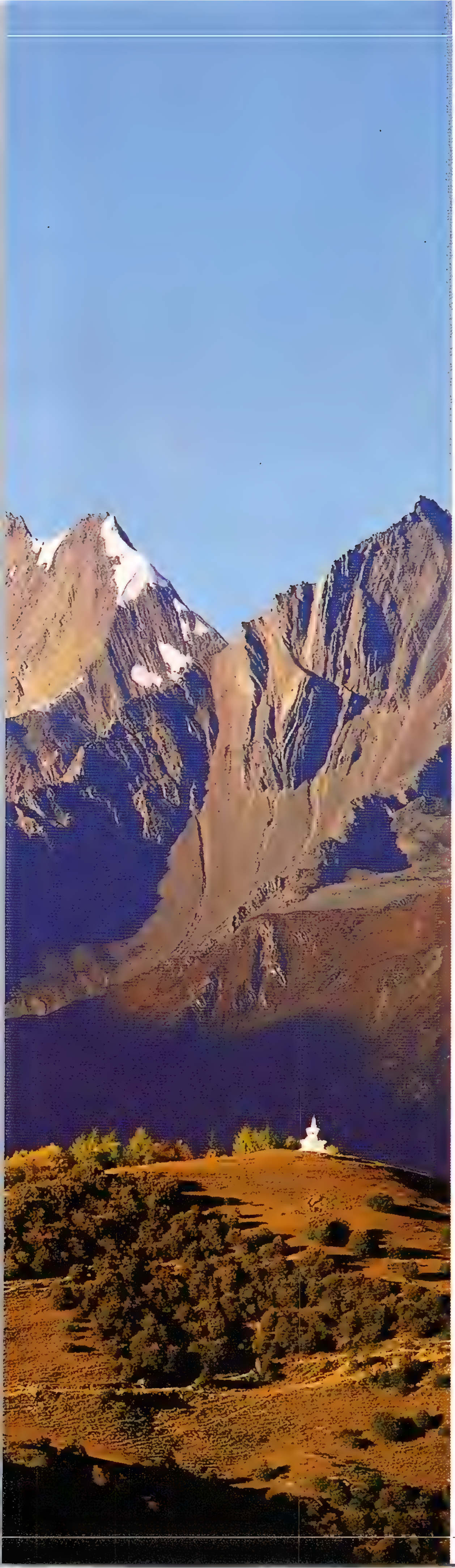
Guizhou Bamboo Shoots and Chicken



A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH MT. SIGUNIANG

Photos & Article [illegible]

God created countless peaks and summits in Sichuan, then anointed a King and Queen of them all, the 7,556 m "King of Sichuan's Mountains" – Mt.Gongga and his 6,230 m companion, the "Queen of Sichuan's Mountains". Together these two mountains make up the Mt. Siguniang (Four Beauties or Four Maidens Mountain).



During the middle of October, when autumnal hues paint the entire northwestern plateau of Sichuan Province into a stunning landscape, we immersed ourselves in the colours and sights of the golden season. First, we experienced the intoxicating beauty of Jiuzhaigou Gully and Huanglong, then set out for our date with the Four Beauties, crossing the 5,040 m Balang Mountain.

Across the Balang Mountain — Rendezvous with the Four Beauties

Balang Mountain lies between Mt. Siguniang and the home of giant pandas, Wolong Reserve. Our bus climbed the winding roads of the 1,200 m Wolong Youyougu Valley, rounding seemingly endless curves to reach the pinnacle of Balang Mountain, an utterly different world. The western skies were clear and sunny on the vast horizon, and as far as the eye could see, sun-drenched valleys and never-ending hills disappeared into the distance. A backward peek to the east showed that our route had already been enshrouded by the roaming clouds. Balang Mountain's famed sea of clouds was every bit as awe inspiring as we had imagined. A large sign greeted us at the pass — "Balang Mountain Pass .You have successfully conquered a mountain of 4,523 m altitude → Siguniang Summit 30 km".

The east and west peaks of Balang Mountain are two totally different pressure zones. The east is often a moving watercolour of mist and clouds, while visibility in the west is perfect. Given the strong sunshine, the contrast never ceases to amaze.

The road was downhill after the Balang Mountain Pass, and soon we arrived in the township of Rilong, which is a tourist depot for Mt. Siguniang. But first we came to a flat spot on the winding road near Rilong, where almost all the vehicles had stopped. Camera-toting hordes were busy snapping pictures of Mt.Siguniang. This perfect lookout point is quaintly named Maobiliang (Cat's Nose Bridge).

Shuangqiaogou Gully — a Gallery of Glaciers, Forests, Streams and Meadows

The original Tibetan name of Mt. Siguniang was Kula Shidak — meaning abode of the mountain god. Legend has it that the four connecting peaks were shaped by four pure and innocent maidens, hence the charming name. The four mountains are spread out from the north to the south within a 3.5 km belt, the tallest being the Youngest Maiden Mountain (Mt. Siguniang). The Third Maiden (Mt. Sanguniang) is at 5,664 m elevation, the Second Maiden (Mt. Erguniang) at 5,454 m altitude and the Eldest Maiden (Mt. Daguniang) is 5,355 m above sea level. While all of the

1) Viewing the principle peak of Mt. Siguniang from Maobiliang. The town below is Guozhuangping, where the Tibetans worship the mountain on April 5 every year.
2) The splendid sea clouds at Balang Mountain.

mountains are ice-capped and snow-covered all year long, the Youngest Maiden Mountain is the tallest and grandest of them all. Perhaps because of her height and unattainable beauty, she is the only one of the four maidens who is unmarried, spurring many climbers' imagination. More than a few of travellers to Mt. Siguniang jest that they are in pursuit of the Youngest Maiden.

But the Youngest Maiden is an icy beauty that one can only admire from afar, while an intimate encounter takes more than just courage. Normally Mt. Siguniang tours take visitors along its surrounding three gullies, with their fairytale scenes of forest, meadows, grassy knolls, dreamlike landscapes of gushing streams, mirror-perfect lakes, and the panoramic views of the majestic summits, especially Mt. Siguniang. Should you chance upon the festivities of the Jiarong Tibetans, then you're in for a treat as the Tibetans' passion and joy are on full show.

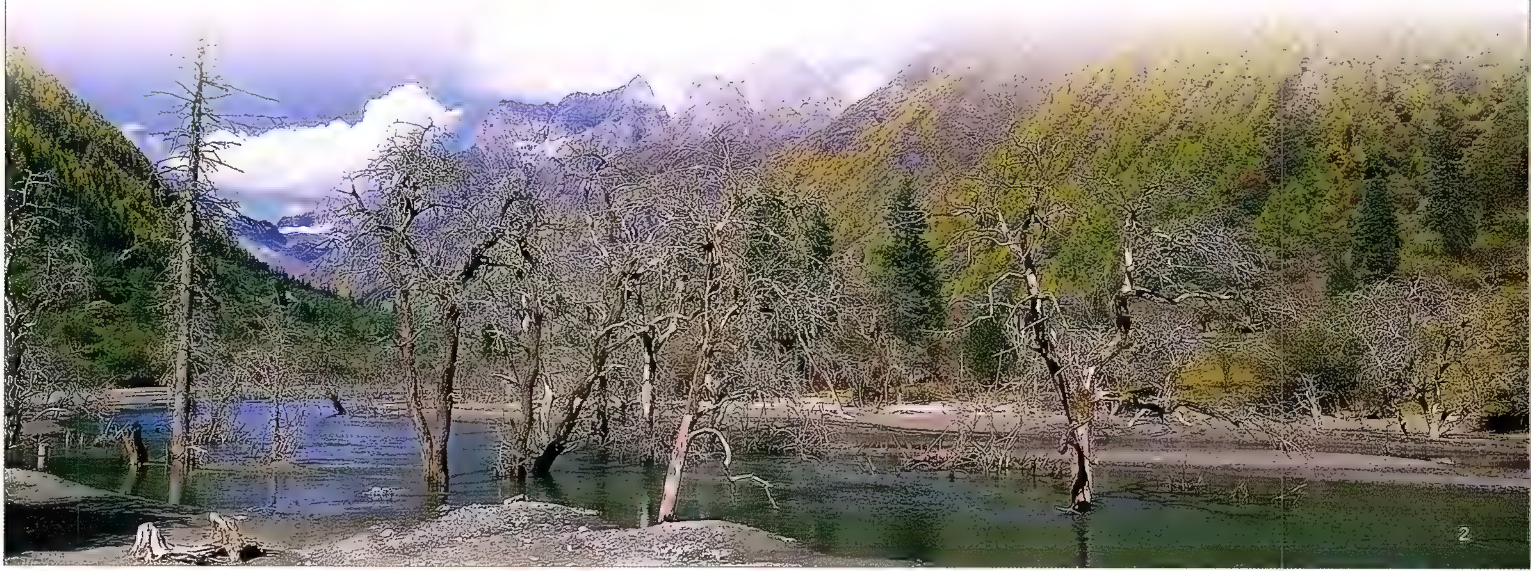
The three gullies are roughly north-south in layout and radiate outwards, in the order of west to east. They are Shuangqiaogou (gou means gully in Chinese) Gully, Changpinggou Gully, and Haizigou Gully, the entrances to which are all south of Rilong Town. Most tourists visit Shuangqiaogou and Changpinggou Gullies, whereas Haizigou Gully is more for mountaineer wanna-bes.

On the second day, we caught a tourist minibus at the bus depot to head into Shuangqiaogou Gully. This is the only gully at Mt. Siguniang that is accessible by bus, but only for special tourist buses of the scenic area. All other vehicles are forbidden from entering. There are not many scheduled buses so to avoid being left without a ride back, usually tourists take the same bus and arrange with the driver to meet at a certain time, before moving off separately. As a large group, we simply asked the driver to drive all the way to the farthest stop of Shuangqiaogou Gully — Hongshanlin or Red Firs Forest, then headed back stop by stop.

Of the three, Shuangqiaogou Gully is the crown jewel in the Mt. Siguniang region. Stretching for 34.8 km, there are tall peaks on both sides of the valley, while the foot of the mountains is densely forested. Lovers of fall foliage will find leaves in dew-encrusted emerald to rich gold and every hue in between. The valley never bores with its ever-changing landscape, one minute it is a huge flat pasture for yaks and sheep, the next moment it narrows to a sidewalk. A clear stream makes its way through the valley, at times gushing with vigor, then it stills to mirror-like tranquility. The real visual feast however, has to be the mid-section from Nianyuba to Renshenguoping, where weird and wonderful plants grow in the river. On the riverbank are thick tangles of sea buckthorn that stretch for miles. The seabuck thorn, a famed local delicacy, is a highly nutritious fruit found in the wild that can be made into a thirst-quenching beverage.

1

The wide expanse of the valley makes it a showcase for the surrounding mountains. There are over a dozen snowy peaks at elevations of 4,000 — 5,000 m. The accompanying Tibetan guide pointed out to us from north to south the A-bi Mountain, Yeren Feng (Wildman Peak), Niuxin Shan (Bull Heart Mountain), Laoying Yan (Eagle Rock), Lieren Feng (Hunter's Peak), Jianzi Shan (Spike Mountain), Riyue Baojing (Precious Mirror of Sun and Moon) Mountain, and Wuse Shan (Five-colour Mountain). She also recounted some love stories about the mountains and the Four Beauties, but my preoccupation with photography meant I never really understood the romantic tangle. Alas, a peek at the Four Beauties was not possible at Shuangqiaogou Gully, as they are right between Changpinggou and Haizgou Gullies.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Changpinggou Gully — a Glimpse of Mt.Siguniang from Primitive Forests

The third day saw us venture into Changpinggou Gully, literally walking our way in.

Changpinggou Gully tours are usually on horseback, and at the entrance the Tibetans prepare hundreds of horses for tourists to hire. But realizing the difficulty of achieving photographic masterpieces on horseback, we chose to go on foot.

The entire length of Changpinggou Gully is 29 km, a lot narrower than Shuangqiaogou Gully. So expect an enjoyable trek walking amongst tree giants and occasionally having to brush aside branches.

There is a path for horses and one for people in the narrow valley. We were using a wooden planked passage, which became slick with moisture in the shade. Walking with heavy camera gear at elevations exceeding 3,000 m is no mean feat. Thankfully every time we were

1. **The autumnal charm of the serene valley at the east foot of Mt. Siguniang.**
2. **Penjing Bay, located at the Shuangqiaogou Gully, has many uniquely shaped trees.**
3. **Shuangqiaogou Gully is a vast grassland with grand mountain ranges and forest.**
4. **The pagoda of Tibetan Buddhism at Renshenguoping is where the Tibetans worship.**

forced to stop for a rest, there was some gorgeous sight that tempted us to stop and shoot some pictures, so rest stops were plentiful.

It is an amazing feeling to be in such proximity to virgin forests. Near us, many branches were adorned with usnea. The pale green fibers hung in fuzzy bunches and swayed in the wind, like goatee beards. The usnea is not a plant but a lichen — a symbiotic relationship between an algae and a fungus that is found only in the purest of forests. Locals call it Muluosuo, or just "Guamian" (noodles). Looking at the hills through the lush forests, we saw a kaleidoscope of colours, evergreen pines and cedars, deciduous trees now dyed a rainbow spectrum of hues by the season. The taller branches were dressed in a coat of silver from last night's snow, while candy floss clouds wafted amid the continuum of colors, exaggerating the brilliance of the sun.

It is rare for visitors of Changpinggou Gully to make it all the way in, and we also turned back in the middle due to time constraints. Where we stopped was a wooden bridge across a crystal clear stream, and looking up, we were rewarded with a picture-perfect vision of the Youngest Maiden above the V-shaped valley, sheathed enchantingly in a wisp of a cloud. We were so close, we could see clearly every texture in the

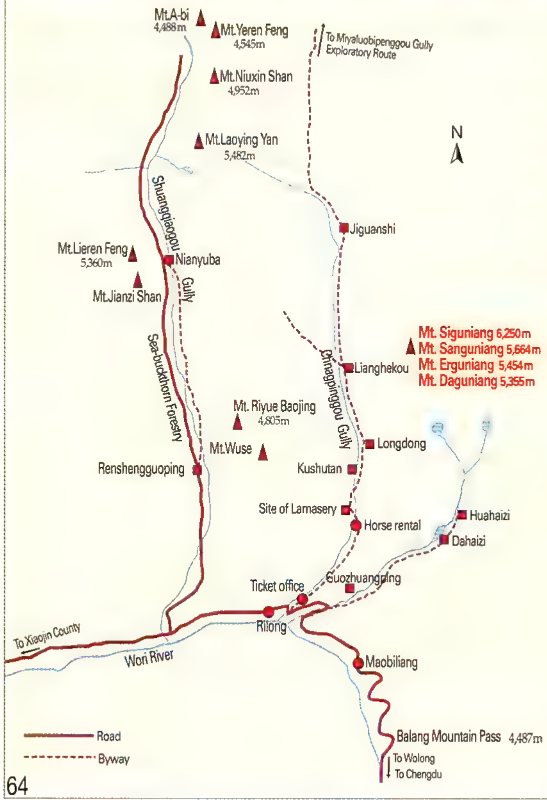
Travel Tips

Geography

Mt.Siguniang is situated at the border of Xiaojin County and Wenchuan County of Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan province, 220 km from Chengdu and 56 km from the township of Xiaojin. Mt. Siguniang Scenic Zone takes up 1,376 km² and is predominantly made up of "three gullies and one mountain": Mt. Siguniang, Shuangqiaogou Gully, Changpinggou Gully and Haizigou Gully.

Mt. Siguniang marks a steep jump in the transition zone between the high Tibetan plateau and the lowland Sichuan basin. Its topography is typical of mountainous valleys with the main summit 6,250 m above sea level. There are also several snow-capped mountains above 5,000 m, forming a splendid cluster of peaks.

The Map of Mt.Siguniang Scenic Area


Mt.A-bi 4,488m
Mt.Yeren Feng 4,545m
To Miyaluobipenggou Gully Exploratory Route
Mt.Niuxin Shan 4,952m
Mt.Laoying Yan 5,482m
N
Shuangqiaogou Gully
Jiguanshi
Mt.Lieren Feng 5,360m
Nianyuba
Mt.Jianzi Shan
Mt. Siguniang 6,250m
Mt. Sanguniang 5,664m
Mt. Erguniang 5,454m
Mt. Daguniang 5,355m
Lianghekou
Sea-buckthorn Forestry
Changpinggou Gully
Mt. Riyue Baojing 4,805m
Longdong
Mt.Wuse
Renshengguoping
Kushutan
Site of Lamasery
Horse rental
Huahaizi
Dahaizi
Ticket office
Guozhuangping
To Xiaojin County
Rilong
Wori River
Maobiliang
Balang Mountain Pass 4,487m
To Wolong
To Chengdu
Road
Byway

The diverse flora and fauna of Mt. Siguniang is another attraction, and it is home to a wide range of endangered species, such as China's unique Sichuan red fir, Minjiang cedar, single-leaf grass, Star-leaf grass, and Longevity Grass. While the animals include 28 types of protected wildlife such as lynxes, wild yaks, golden monkeys, white-lipped deer, snow leopards, red pandas (also called lesser pandas) and green-tailed rainbow pheasants among others.

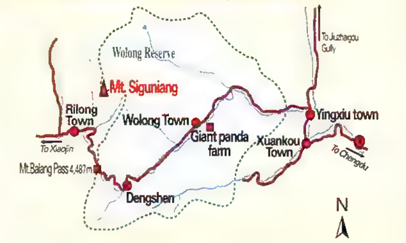
Transport

Starting out from Chengdu, shuttle buses are available at the Ximen Bus Depot for Xiaojin County. It takes half a day to get to Rilong Town.

Rilong Town is the only way to enter the mountains. There are minivans or minibuses from Rilong Town going to the entrances of Shuangqiaogou and Changpingguo Gullies. Scenic area buses go to Shuangqiaoguo Gully. To explore Changpinggou Gully you can take a bus to the Lamasery, then either walk or hire a horse to enter the gully. Haizigou Gully visits are best made on horseback from the gully entrance, where Tibetans and their horses are ready for hire daily.

- **Entrance Fee** Peak season, April — November: Balang Mountain (25 yuan), Changpinggou Gully (40 yuan), Shuangqiaogou Gully (40yuan), Haizigou Gully (30 yuan). Slack season, December — March: Changpinggou Gully (35 yuan), Shuangqiaogou Gully (30yuan), Haizigou Gully (20 yuan). Students: buy five tickets, get one free.

The location of Mt.Siguniang


Wolong Reserve
To Jiuzhaigou Gully
Mt. Siguniang
Rilong Town
Wolong Town
Yingxiu town
Giant panda farm
Xuankou Town
To Xiaojin
To Chengdu
Mt.Balang Pass 4,487m
Dengshen
N

- **Bus Fares** Shuangqiaogou Gully, entire journey, 60 yuan per person. Minivan hire from Rilong Town to Cat's nose bridge, 50 yuan, bus to Shuangqiao Gully entrance, 20 yuan.
- **Horseback Riding** 50 yuan to get to Kushutan, or up to 80 yuan per day.

Expert Tips

Shuangqiaogou Gully is a photographers' paradise, usually half-day or one-day tours are arranged. Time is in the hands of the tourist bus driver, who usually stops at six areas, the Hongshanlin (Red Firs Forest), Niupengzi (Cowshed), entrance to towpath, exit of towpath, Nianyuba, and Renshenguoping. Besides the walk from the towpath, a further 20-minute walk is enough. Changpinggou Gully is nirvana for keen hikers, but the entire length of 29 km is hard to cover in one day, usually the journey stops at Kushutan, the foot of Mt. Siguniang at most 16 km away, or Ganhaizi. Changpinggou Gully's finest section starts at Ganhaizi, from there on in you'll find spectacular waterfalls. Whereas the innermost scenic spot Jiguanshi (Rooster's Crown Rock), has abundant huge red rocks that will amaze even the most jaded tourist. Horses are available for hire near the gully entrance, priced at 80 yuan per day but you may be able to find a better deal hiring them from the Lamasery within the valley.

Haizigou Gully's prime attraction is the dozen or so lakes dotted around the region. The best and the largest lakes are Huahaizi and Dahaizi. The 19.2 km length of Haizigou Gully on horseback takes a whole day. The Daguniang (Eldest Maiden) Mountain at the west of Haizigou Gully is relatively easy to climb. Guozhuangping is a large grass field in the mountain and one of the best spots to see Mt. Siguniang. Come May 4 in the lunar calendar each year, the Mountain-Worship Festival, Tibetans from miles away congregate here to pray to the majestic mountains and hold festivities like horse racing, and dance the "Guozhuang" — a joyous group dance.

mountain, every mark in the snow. It was a moment that made one's heart race.

I left, but not without backward glances and an everlasting image of the mountain burned into my memory.

Translated by Cheng Lei

1) **Usnea, also known as old man's beard, is a type of lichen. The locals like to call it "Guamian" (noodles).**
2) **The mysterious foggy forest of Changpinggou.**
3) **Riding towards Changpinggou (by Zhou Xiaolin, Yinjie)**
4) **The Wolong Nature Reserve Area Of Mr. Sigunlang is the most important natural habitat for panda. (By Hu Bin)**

Two Ideal Spots: The first is Maobiliang, near the foot of Balang Mountain Road, and the second one is Guozhuangping. In addition, Wuse Shan, or Five-coloured mountain, is best seen from Sanguozhuang, around 45 minutes walk from Shuang Diao Village.

Accommodation and Food

Rilong Town has no shortage of places to eat and stay. Accommodation options are concentrated in the villages of Changping and Jinfeng, as well as the entrance to the Shuangqiaogou Gully, ranging from home-stay and small inns to four-star hotels. Bargaining for accommodation is normal, start at 50 percent off. The better hotels and restaurants include: Mt. Siguniang Hotel (4 stars), new Mt. Siguniang Lodge (4 stars), Mt. Siguniang Inn, and Xinmao Hotel.

Rilong Town has a wide range of restaurants, mainly offering Sichuan fare. The standard cuisine at the luxury hotels is great, but it is pricy.

Of the three gullies, Shuangqiaogou Gully is the only one where Tibetans set up stalls selling food such as dairy products, yak butter bread and instant noodles. It is recommended that visitors bring dry food and water for lunch.

There is a fast food outlet in the town of Rilong, Tel:13909048578, 2791820, which delivers to Shuangqiaogou Gully.

Routes

- **Time required to tour Changpinggou Gully on horse-back:**

  Lamasery — bus stops there
  Lamasery — Kushutan, about 2 hours
  Kushutan — Longdong, about 1 hour
  Longdong — Shajilin, about 30 minutes
  Shajilin — lower Ganhaizi and upper Ganhaizi, at the foot of Mt. Siguniang, about 1 hour
  Ganhaizi — Lianghekou, about 1 hour
  Lianghekou — Muluozi, about 1 hour
  Muluozi — Liushuba, about 1 hour
  Liushuba — Jiguanshi, about 1 hour
  Jiguanshi — Shibaopeng, about 1 hour
  Shibaopeng — Leigushi, about 1 hour
  Leigushi — Kazigou Gully, about 1 hour

- **Time required for touring Haizigou Gully on horseback**

  Haizigou Gully — Guozhuangping, about 40 minutes, 3 km
  Guozhuangping — Chaoshanping, about 20 minutes, 3 km
  Chaoshanping — Dajianbao, about 2 hours
  Haizigou entrance — Dahaizi, 4 hours
  Dahaizi — Huahaizi, about 30 minutes
  Huahaizi — the glaciers about 4 hours

- **Mt.Siguniang, Balang Snow Mountain, Wolong Youyougu Valley Tour Itinerary**

  Day 1 : Chengdu — Wolong — Mt.Siguniang

  Visit the Wolong Giant Panda Research Centre, Wolong Youyou Valley, Balang Mountain, highland pastures. Arrive at Maobiliang before sunset for outlook onto Mt. Siguniang, stay at Rilong Town

  Day 2 : Discover Mt. Siguniang — Changpinggou Gully

  Explore (on foot or horseback) Tibetan villages, virgin forests, the Lhama Temple, grand vista of Mt.Siguniang Summit

  Day 3 : See Mt. Siguniang — Haizigou Gully

  See the sights (on foot or horseback) of Guozhuangping, Laoniuyuanzi, Huahaizi, highland pastures, virgin forests

  Day 4 : Visit Mt.Siguniang — Shuangqiaogou Gully

  Bus tour of Yinyang Gu, Wuse Shan, Shajilin, Renshenguoping, Nianyuba, Jianzi Shan, Lieren Feng, Niuxin Shan, Hongshanlin, Yeren Feng, A-bi Mountain

  Day 5 : Mt.Siguniang — Balang Mountain — Chengdu

  Panoramic views of Mt. Siguniang, Balang Mountain's sea of clouds, back to Chengdu

Average temperatures (°C)

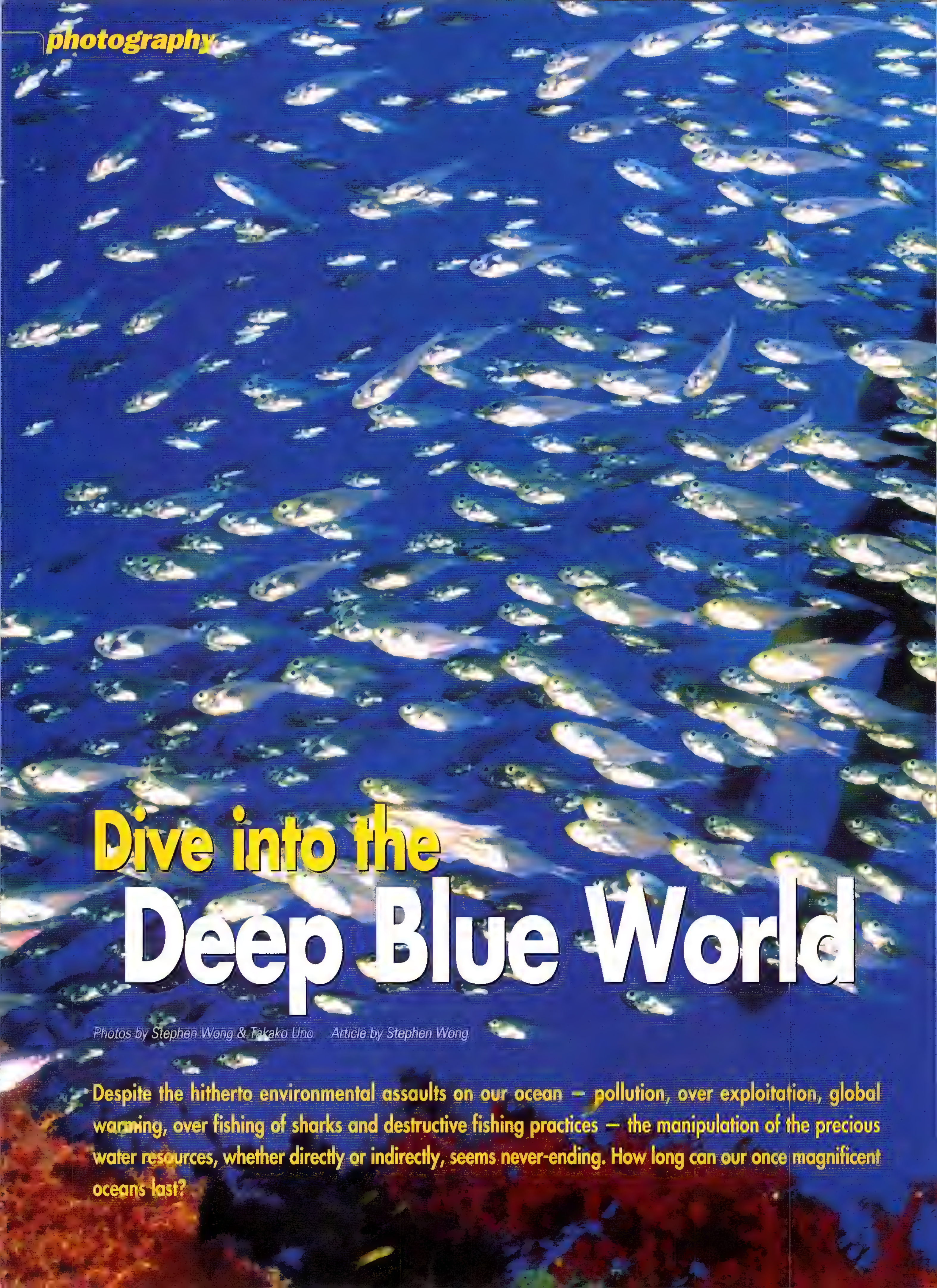
- **Mt.Siguniang (Rilong 3,160 m)**

Jan	Feb	Ma	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-2.4	0.3	4.1	6.9	9.7	10.8	12.5	13	10.3	6.5	1.9	-2.5

- **Snow season** Nov — Apr
- **Clothing in Autumn**

  wool sweater, heavy jacket, gloves, scarves, warm and waterproof hiking boots
- **Other Essentials**

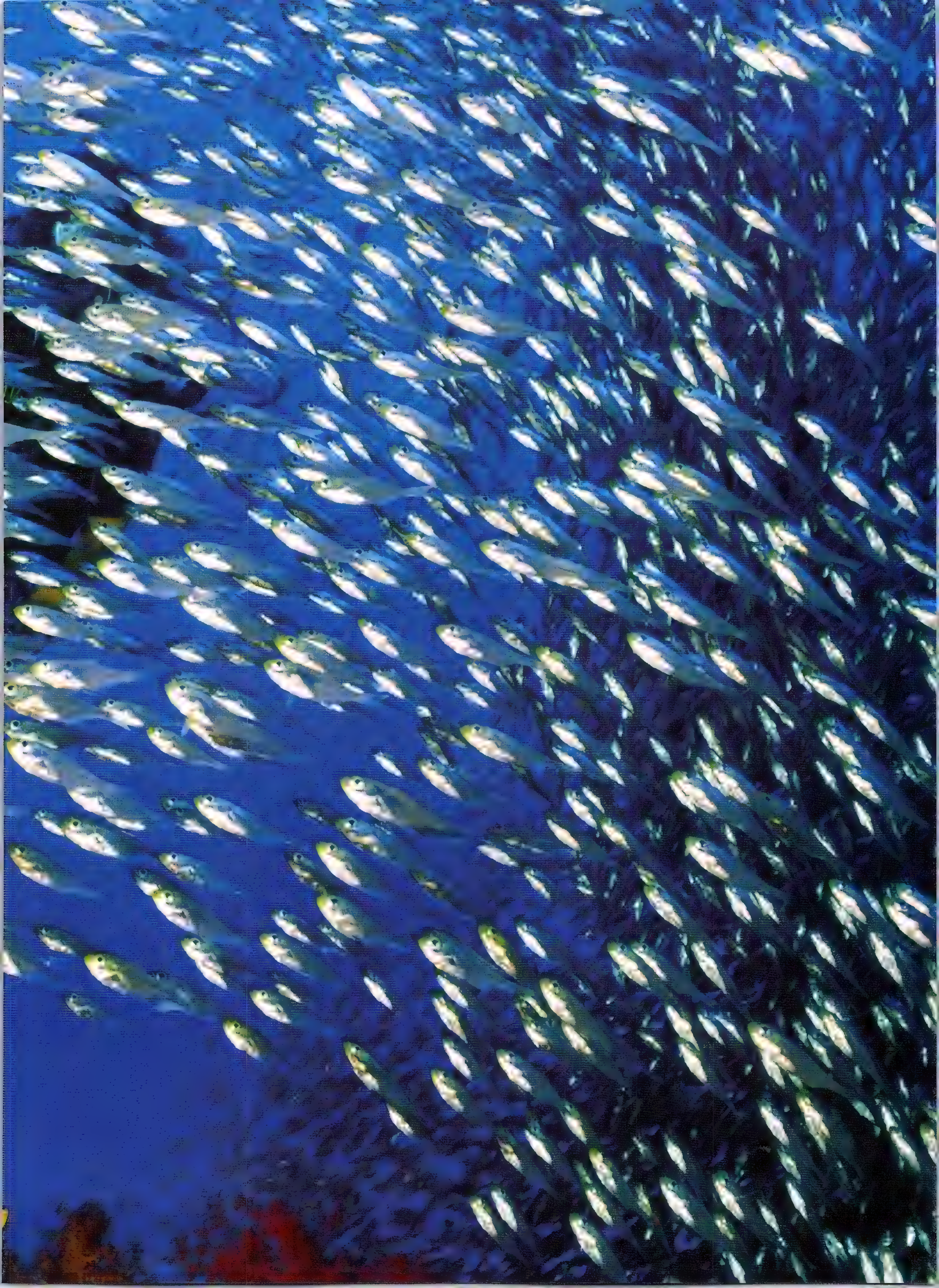
  sunglasses, flu & cold medicine, moisturizer, sunscreen lotion, rain-gear, torch; those who may suffer altitude sickness should bring medication accordingly

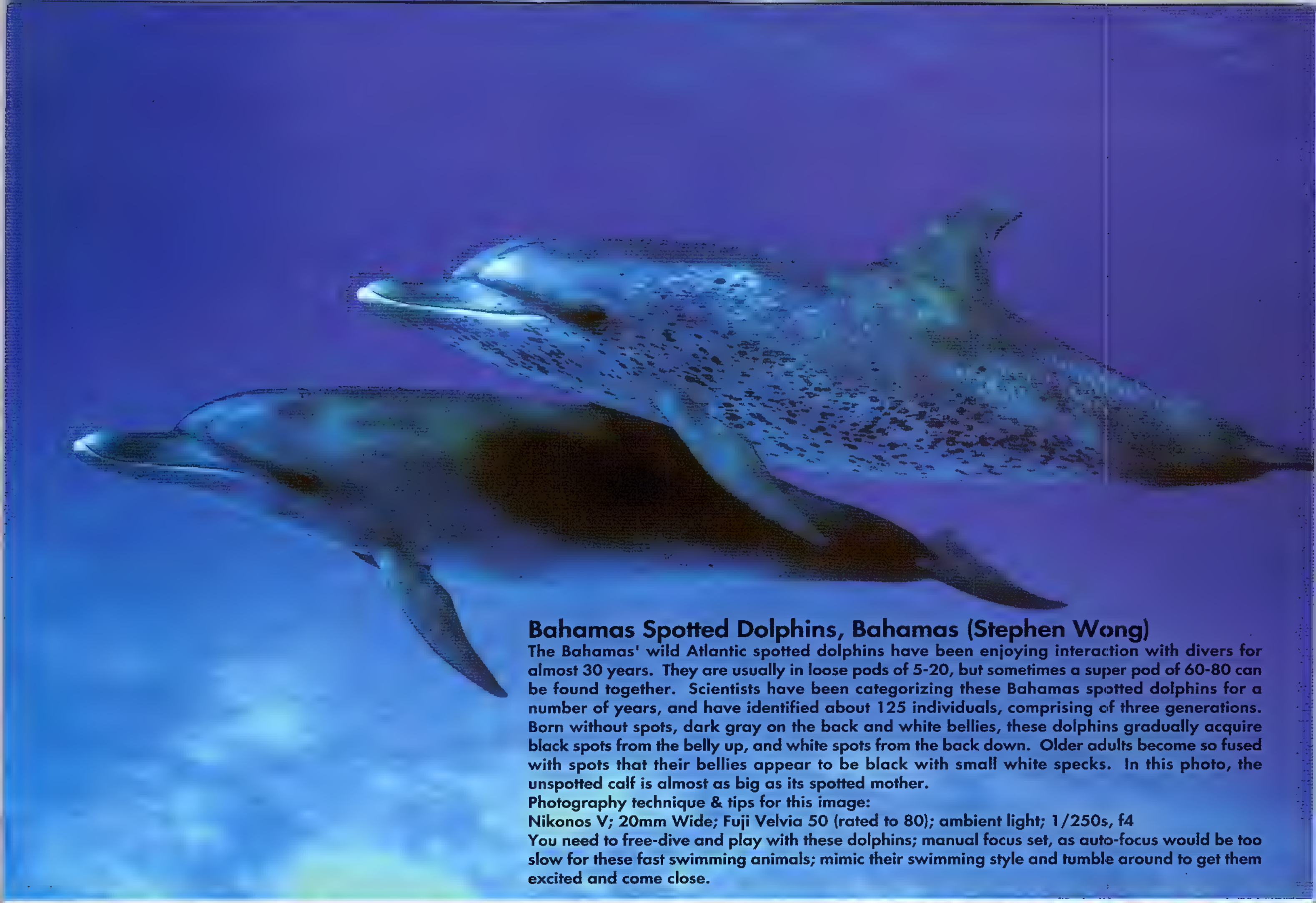


Dive into the
Deep Blue World

Photos by Stephen Wong & Takako Uno   Article by Stephen Wong

Despite the hitherto environmental assaults on our ocean – pollution, over exploitation, global warming, over fishing of sharks and destructive fishing practices – the manipulation of the precious water resources, whether directly or indirectly, seems never-ending. How long can our once magnificent oceans last?





Bahamas Spotted Dolphins, Bahamas (Stephen Wong)

The Bahamas' wild Atlantic spotted dolphins have been enjoying interaction with divers for almost 30 years. They are usually in loose pods of 5-20, but sometimes a super pod of 60-80 can be found together. Scientists have been categorizing these Bahamas spotted dolphins for a number of years, and have identified about 125 individuals, comprising of three generations. Born without spots, dark gray on the back and white bellies, these dolphins gradually acquire black spots from the belly up, and white spots from the back down. Older adults become so fused with spots that their bellies appear to be black with small white specks. In this photo, the unspotted calf is almost as big as its spotted mother.

Photography technique & tips for this image:

Nikonos V; 20mm Wide; Fuji Velvia 50 (rated to 80); ambient light; 1/250s, f4

You need to free-dive and play with these dolphins; manual focus set, as auto-focus would be too slow for these fast swimming animals; mimic their swimming style and tumble around to get them excited and come close.

Why Do I Shoot?

I consider myself one of those lucky people who have the opportunity to experience the grandeur of the ocean, and it is my mission to share these wonders with others.

The oceans are facing great threats. Pollution, over-harvesting, global warming, dynamiting, and other detrimental factors are slaughtering our oceans and inhabitants. Gruesome ghost nets drift aimlessly, trapping all the unfortunate creatures in their path. Shrimp trawlers waste more than 90 percent of their by-catch, let alone the destruction of habitat, while cyanide fishing kills all life, including coral. The mercury level in most consumable ocean species is frightfully high, and I only wish that governments told all the details to the public. Yes, the sea is in trouble, and so are we, and our children.

I hope in some way, that my images can help people to learn how delicate and precious the ocean's creatures truly are, and subsequently influence the change necessary to save them for future generations.

How Do I Shoot?

I have a passion for marine animals, from pea-sized gobies to giant whales. Prior to shooting I make a point of studying the animal's habitat and behavioral traits. If I cannot locate the information from books, I always ask my colleagues. I also try to communicate with the targeted animal, because I truly believe this approach can be rewarding.

There are basically three main categories in my photography: a) Blue water, b) Wide angle reef and schooling fish and c) Macro. Although I consider them all equally challenging, lately I have been spending more time on the blue water aspects, such as dolphins and whales.

Where Do I Shoot?

Every location is unique, made up of the animals, the fauna or simply the site itself. Hence, I believe everywhere has its own beauty, including the waters around Hong Kong.

▲ **Mantis Shrimp in Striking Pose, Indonesia (Takako Uno)**

When a mantis shrimp is threatened, it rears up and poses like this. If you don't back off, the mantis shrimp might come out and hammer you with its frontal appendages. The power of the mantis shrimp is impressive and the blow can break bones.

Photography technique & tips for this image:

Nikonos RS; 50mm Macro; Fuji Velvia 50; -4/3 EV, u/w Strobes; 1/125s, f16

Front Page:

Glassy Sweepers & Diver, Red Sea (Stephen Wong)

This image was taken on a sunken wreck in the south of the Red Sea.

Photography technique & tips for this image:

Nikonos RS; 20-35mm Zoom; Fuji Velvia 50; -2/3 EV, u/w Strobes; 1/60s, f4

Do NOT overexpose the foreground (the glassy sweepers) and make sure the tiny fish are in focus.

Equipment:

Cameras: Nikonos V, Nikonos RS, Nikon (F-801s, F-90x & F-5);

Housings: Subal for F801s, Nexus for F90x & SeaCam for F5;

Lenses: all Nikonos RS & V lenses, Nikkor 16 fisheye, 60mm macro, 105mm macro with teleconverter Kenko MC-7 2X; plus a few Nikon topside lenses;

Strobes: Nikon SB-104, Ikelite 225 & Sea & Sea (YS-300,120, 90 & 30).

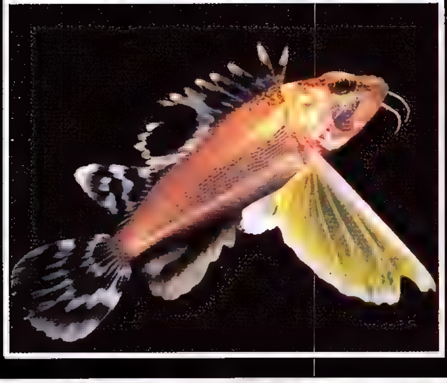
Shooting Underwater:

You may not need to get yourself a waterproof camera to shoot underwater, provided that you have reliable housings for your regular equipments. As for underwater cameras, I would recommend Nikonos V, Nikonos RS and Sea&Sea's MotorMarine.

When shooting underwater, remember that you cannot change film or lens like you do on land. It is best to do your homework and find out about the subjects you plan to shoot beforehand. Bear in mind that your presence may intimidate wild life, and try your best to care for the ocean.

▼ Ocellated Waspfish, Hong Kong (Takako Uno)

This ocellated waspfish is usually found in deeper waters but can luckily be found in the shallows during its juvenile stage. This one was a happy find in our backyard - Hong Kong.



Photography technique & tips for this image:

Nikonos RS; 50mm Macro; Fuji Velvia 50; -1 EV, u/w Strobes; 1/125s, f22

Finding the animal is the most important issue here. Lucky shots of the waspfish in mid-water created the black background, when it swam from the sandy area to mid-water and stayed suspended there.

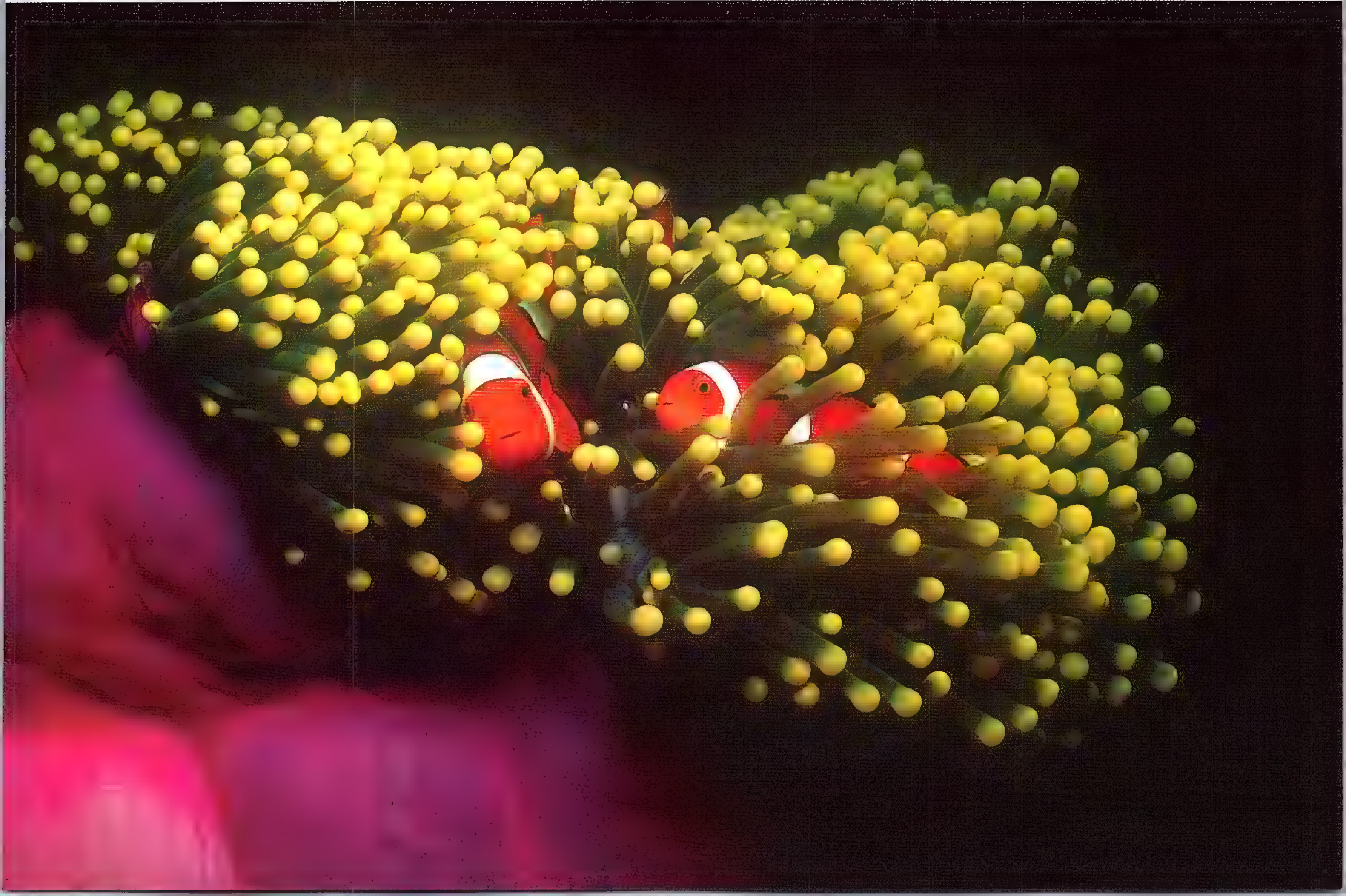
▼ Western Clownfish hiding in host anemone, Papua New Guinea (Stephen Wong)

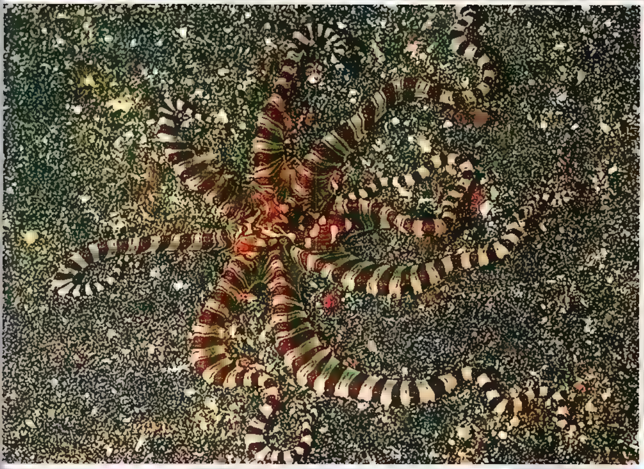
The anemone has small venomous darts that it uses for predation and defense. The clownfish living within acquire a film of protective slime from their host anemone, by gradually rubbing their bodies on the anemone's tentacles. If the clownfish is taken away from the host anemone for a long period of time, the fish has to 're-acclimatize' by rubbing itself on the tentacles again.

Photography technique & tips for this image:

Nikon F801X, Housing; 60mm Macro; Fuji Velvia 50; -2/3 EV, u/w Strobes; 1/250s, f22

Remember, the best underwater shot is still out there, to be captured by photographers. Anemones or clownfish are difficult to shoot well, so you need to shoot a lot, and continue to shoot in many situations. In this picture, I tried to angle the u/w strobes just to reach the subject (no background).





Wunderpus mimicking a Sand Anemone, Indonesia (Stephen Wong)

Some long-armed octopi mimic other species of animals for defense or predation. They have been observed to change forms to mimic the mantis shrimp, flounder, sea snake, jellyfish, feather starfish, lionfish, and even stingrays. The wunderpus in the image is mimicking a poisonous sand anemone.

Photography technique & tips for this image:

Nikonos RS; 50mm Macro; Fuji Velvia 50; -1 EV, u/w Strobes; 1/125, f16

Great White Shark, South Africa (Takako Uno)

South African waters are home to many great white sharks. Shards of light were beaming through the glassy surface, as this four-meter male shark showed, with its mouth agape. I believe no other sharks can create this atmosphere of power, ferocity and grace. The great white shark is definitely in a class of its own.

Photography technique & tips for this image:

Nikonos RS; 13mm Fisheye; Fuji Provia 100 (rated 200); -1/3 EV, ambient light; 1/250s, f5.6

Shoot at low angle to use the sunlight, and shoot more, for usually the great white shark keep its mouth shut.

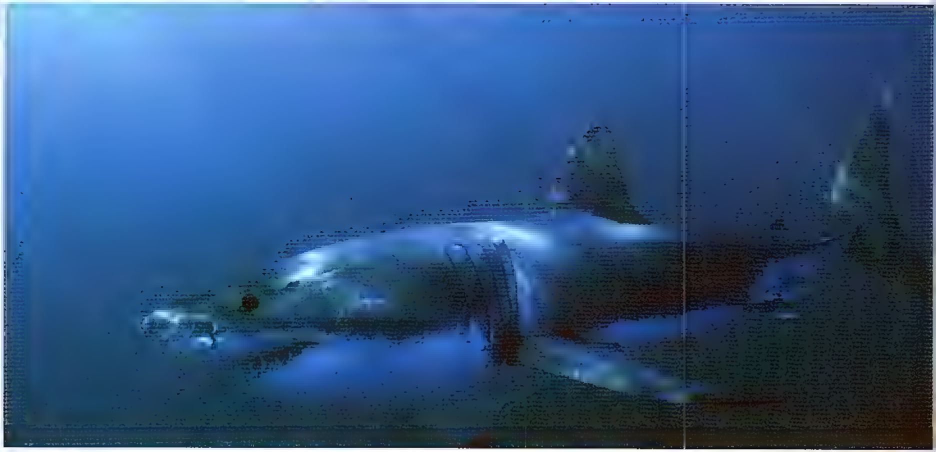
Humpback Whales and Stephen, Tonga (Takako Uno)

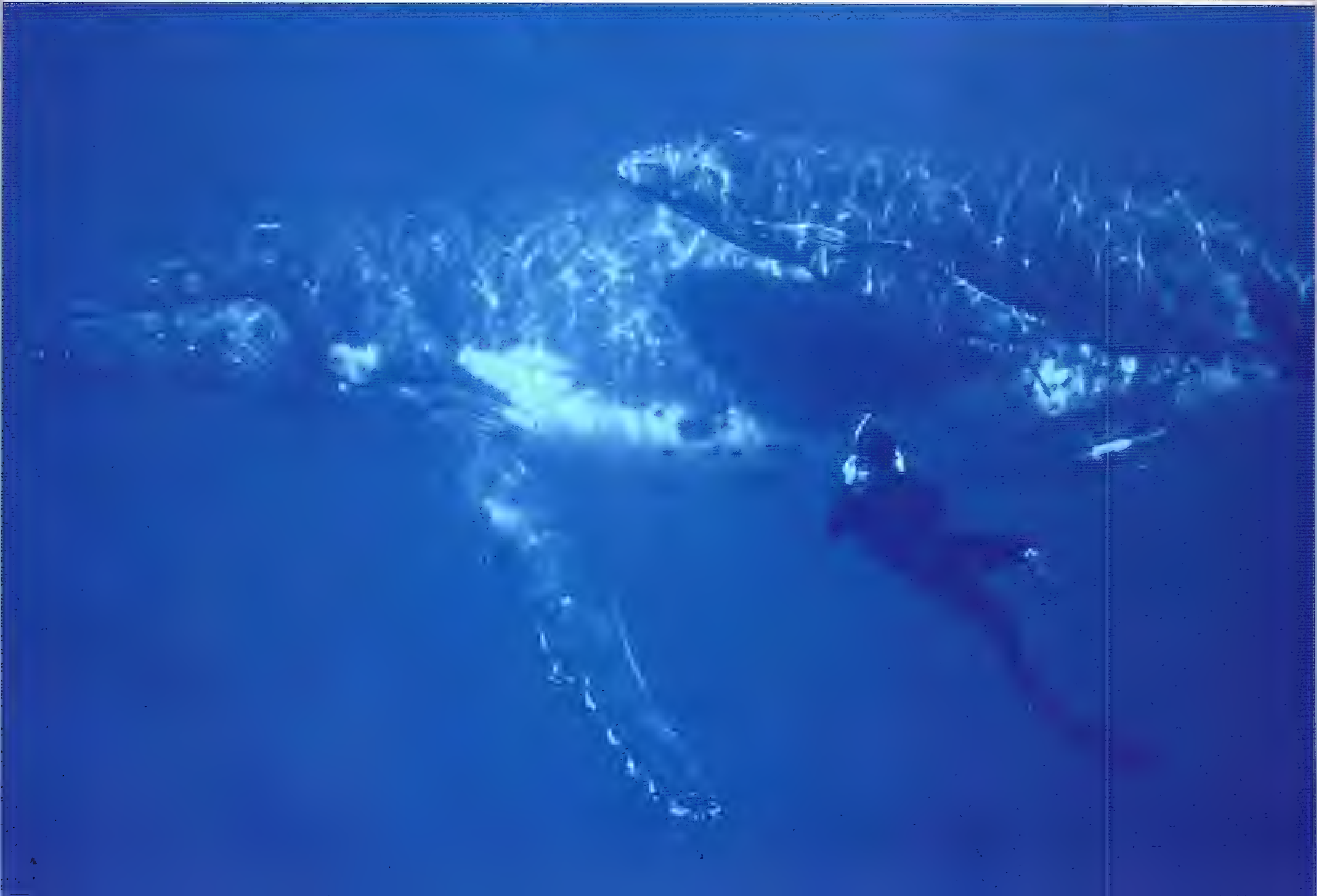
Southern Hemisphere humpback whales visit Tonga from August to November. They are protected and are not difficult to find during this period. However, getting friendly whales to cooperate underwater seemed rather difficult. Usually, mother whales are protective of their calves and disappear at the sight of divers. Stephen got quite close, for this pair was quite inquisitive.

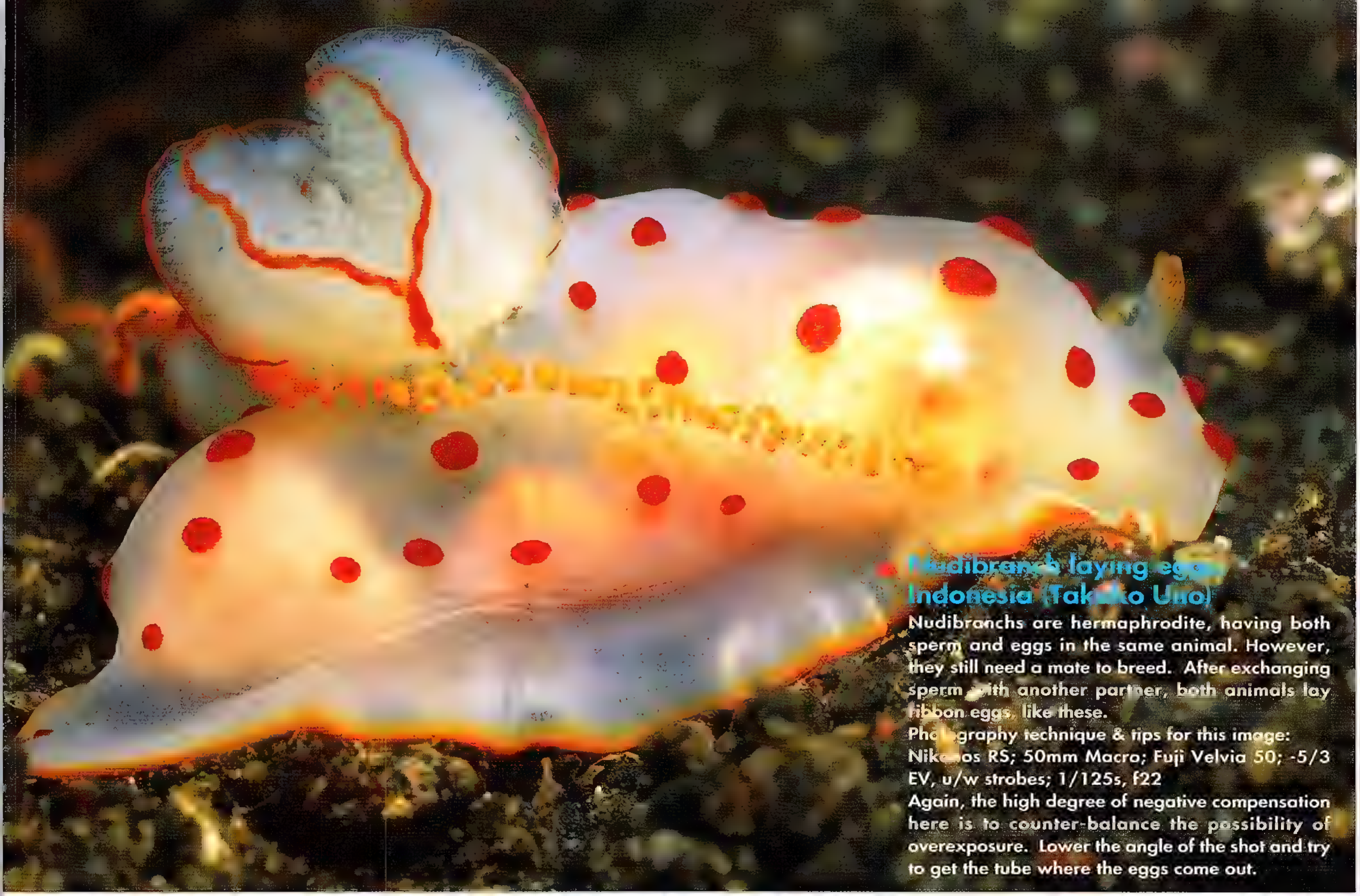
Photography technique & tips for this image:

Nikonos RS; 20-35mm Zoom; Fuji Provia 100; -1/3 EV, ambient light; 1/180s, f4

Try to do more free-diving before any snorkeling trip. Try to have a model in the photo with these giant mammals to give the perspective of their sizes.

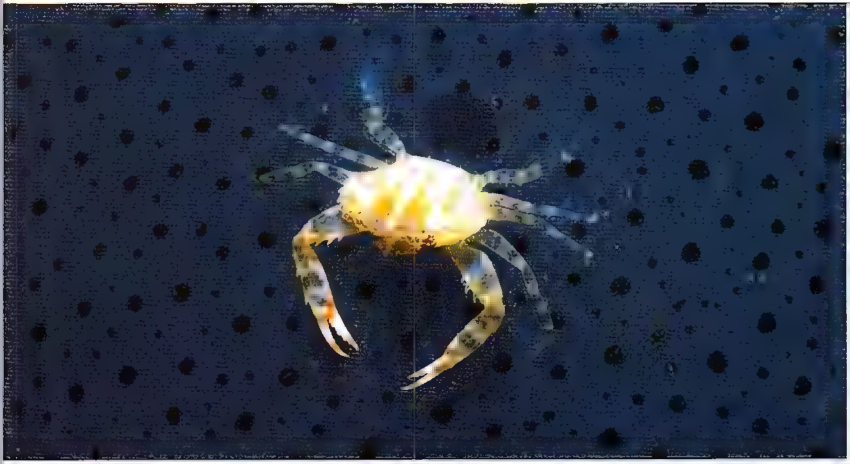


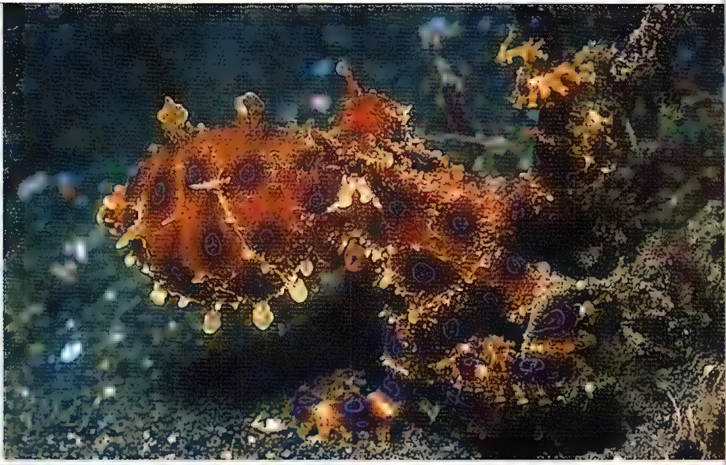




Nudibranch laying eggs, Indonesia (Takako Uno)

Nudibranchs are hermaphrodite, having both sperm and eggs in the same animal. However, they still need a mate to breed. After exchanging sperm with another partner, both animals lay ribbon eggs, like these.
Photography technique & tips for this image:
Nikonos RS; 50mm Macro; Fuji Velvia 50; -5/3 EV, u/w strobes; 1/125s, f22
Again, the high degree of negative compensation here is to counter-balance the possibility of overexposure. Lower the angle of the shot and try to get the tube where the eggs come out.





Commensal Crab on Jellyfish, Hong Kong (Takako Uno)

On a night dive in Hong Kong, a friend found this dead or dying jellyfish. On the body of the jellyfish, commensal crabs and shrimps were feeding. These tiny crustaceans were foraging on the surface of the host and getting protection at the same time.
Photography technique & tips for this image:
Nikonos RS; 50mm Macro; Fuji Velvia 50; -1 EV, u/w Strobes; 1/125s, f22
The -1 EV was utilized because the Matrix Metering on the crab would be compensated.

Blue Ringed Octopus, Indonesia (Takako Uno)

This is one animal that people should really respect, for it has venom stronger than a King Cobra and can be fatal. The octopus flashes its blue rings as a warning and most accidents happen when swimmers or beachcombers are wading the beach or the shallows.
Photography technique & tips for this image:
Nikonos RS; 50mm Macro; Fuji Velvia 50; -2/3 EV, u/w Strobes; 1/125s, f16

Silver-tip shark with fins cut off, Australia (Stephen Wong)

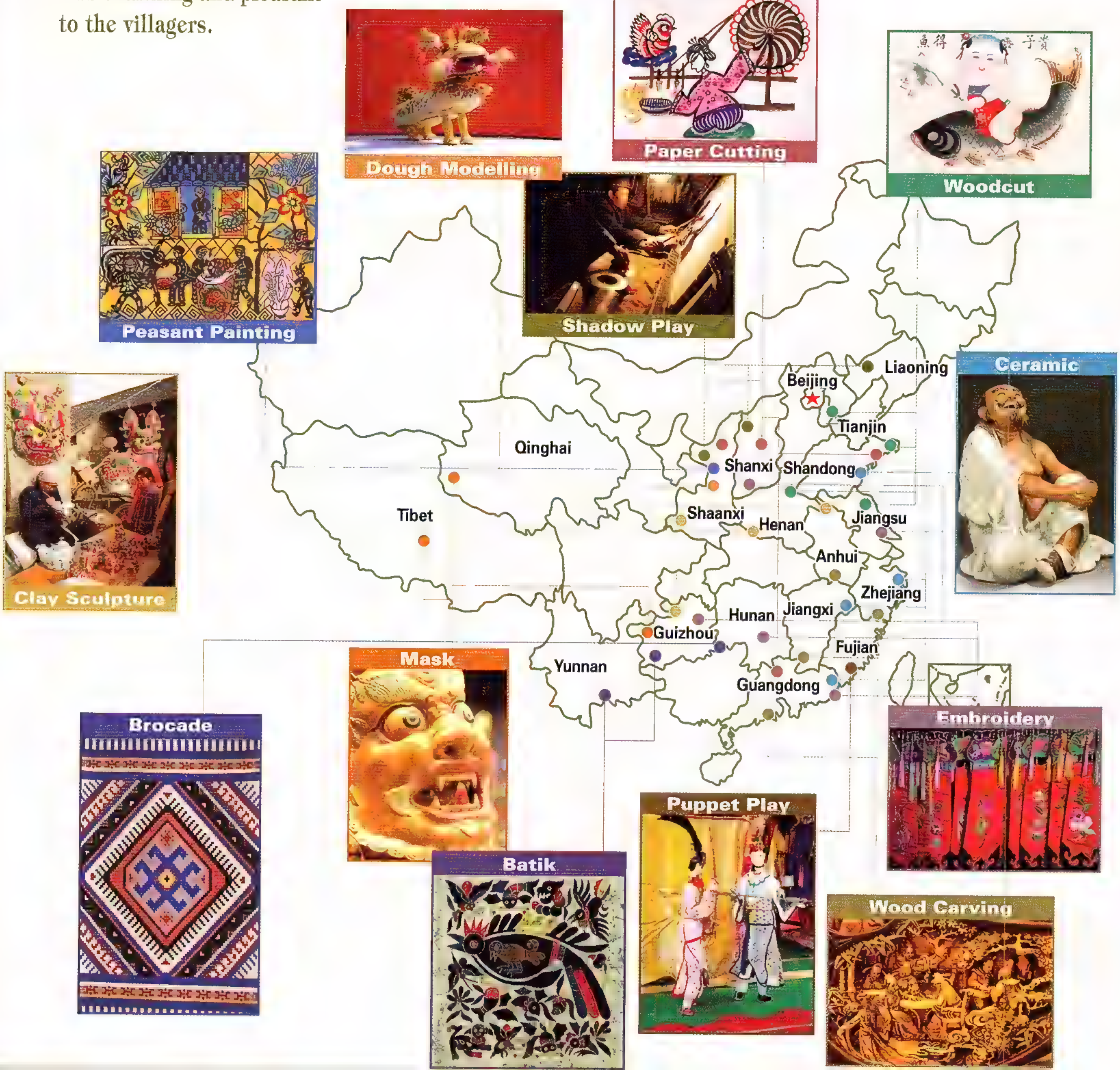
I came upon this shark carcass while enjoying the turquoise blue of the Coral Sea. Being Chinese (who incidentally are the major consumers of shark fins), I felt particularly awkward. In this clear water and white sand environment, one expects to see and capture on film the beauty of living creatures. As the dead apex predator rocked back and forth with the gentle swell of the sea, its lifeless eyes stared blankly into space. Hermit crabs were busily foraging on the poor animal, while I was collecting my thoughts.
Photography technique & tips for this image:
Nikonos V; 15mm Wide, Fuji Velvia 50; -1/3 EV, u/w Strobe; 1/30s, f4
Since the animal was found dead, I didn't want too much strobe dependency (I wanted more natural lighting on the unnatural death).
(www.stephenwong.com)

POPULAR FOLK ARTS AND CRAFTS

The will to pursue beauty transcends all economic and social circumstances. In fact, the most interesting and creative arts are often found in the rural areas.

After years of tilting lands, the peasants have created an integral bond with the wonders of nature. Sunshine, rains, earth and trees all have significant meaning to farmers, as they depend on these elements for survival. Their reverence for the wildlife helps them to discover the beauty of the natural world. With their bare hands and boundless imagination, they use simple materials such as clay, flour, strings, wood and plants to interpreting their insights of beauty. Combing wisdom that comes from nature, these artifacts bring a breath of fresh air to the regular country life.

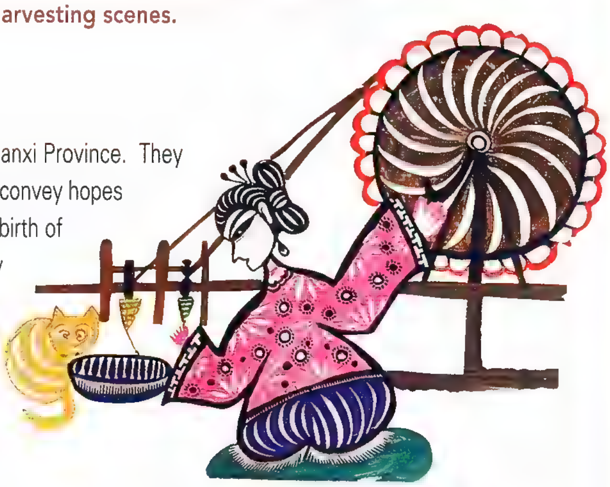
Only a handful of people can afford multi-million dollars sculptures and paintings, but the folk crafts are no less charming and pleasant to the villagers.


Dough Modelling
Paper Cutting
Woodcut
Peasant Painting
Shadow Play
Clay Sculpture
Ceramic
Liaoning
Beijing
Tianjin
Qinghai
Shanxi
Shandong
Tibet
Shaanxi
Henan
Jiangsu
Anhui
Zhejiang
Hunan
Jiangxi
Guizhou
Fujian
Yunnan
Guangdong
Mask
Brocade
Embroidery
Batik
Puppet Play
Wood Carving

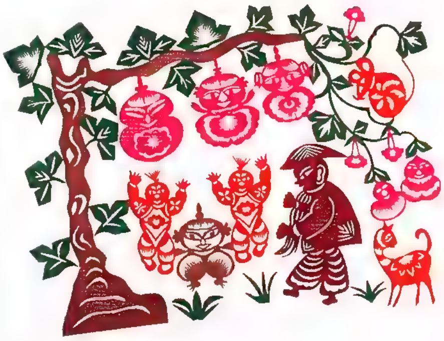
PAPER CUTTING

Paper cutting is a common folk art in rural China. Using scissors, engraving tools and paper, rural women make drafts for embroidery and paper cuts for window decorations. Although the themes are based mostly on daily life, paper cuttings differ in style between southern and northern China. Southern China pieces have exquisitely accurate and detailed features. They mostly show beautiful flowers, butterflies and insects. Meanwhile, northern China works are bold, unrestrained and simple, depicting cows, horses, sheep or farming and harvesting scenes.

SHAANXI PROVINCE



Brightly coloured paper cuttings are popular in the districts of Yan'an and Yulin in Shaanxi Province. They are posted on window frames, ceilings, around brick beds and door lintels. These cuttings convey hopes for good harvests and abundant crops every year. The dragon and unicorn symbolize the birth of a son, a big red chicken wishes good luck, a tiger signifies authority, the crane longevity and deer the vitality of spring. The northern Shaanxi people use the 12 animals, denoting the Chinese birth years in the lunar calendar. They also feature decorative patterns, landscape contours, characters from plays and myths. There are scheduled buses run from Yan'an to Yangjialing Grotto Hotel, where visitors can sample grotto life and watch artists demonstrating their techniques in paper cutting.

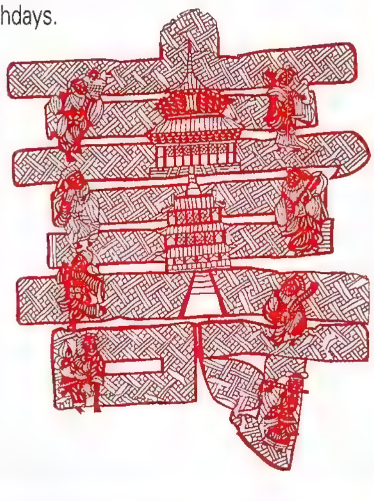


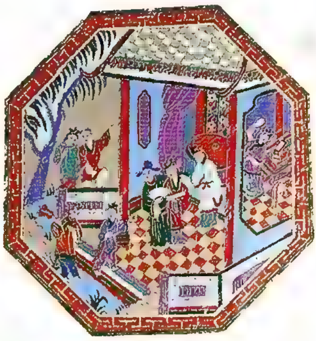
SHANXI PROVINCE

The style of Shanxi paper cuttings reflect the ruggedness and simplicity of life in northern China. There are slight differences in different areas. Simple colours are used in works in south, central and southeastern Shanxi Province and in Luliang Prefecture. Paper cuttings in Yanpei area are multicoloured; the main themes are based on local customs and life. Paper cuttings in Jinpei (northern Shanxi) are unusually rhombus-shaped, round or polygonal. The designs may be only one inch across, and the biggest are quadrilateral, hexagonal and octagonal shapes.

SHANDONG PROVINCE

It is generally said that the finest examples are made in Binzhou, Gaomi and Jiaodong Districts. The style blends Shaanxi and Shanxi traditions with Shandong characteristics. Gaomi has a unique style with bold and somewhat exaggerated designs. The details are precisely worked out. The centre of Jiaodong is Qixia County, where finely detailed art and elaborate works are found. Paper cuttings reflect daily life and are extensively used on occasions such as weddings and birthdays.

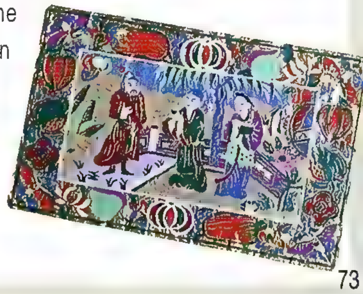




GUANGDONG PROVINCE

The city of Foshan in Guangdong Province has a long history of paper cutting, dating from the Song Dynasty (960-1279) and flourishing in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Paper cuttings are used mainly for decorations on religious offerings, weddings gifts and funerals gifts. They are used as designs and patterns for embroidery and carvings, and categorized according to the materials used: copper and silver engraving, coloured woodcuts and bronze etchings. The designs and patterns have bright colours, reflecting southern Chinese traditions.

Samples of Guangdong paper cuts are displayed at the Foshan Popular Art Research Institute, No.5 Zumiao Road, Foshan City.

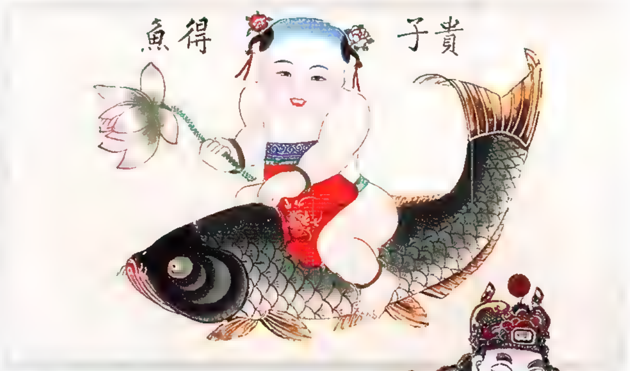


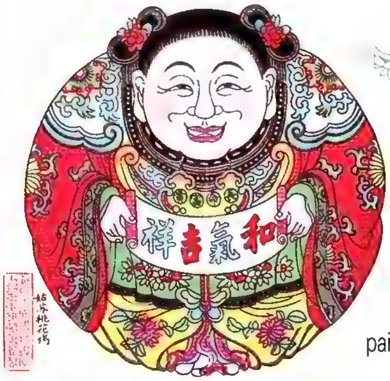
WOODCUT

Chinese woodcuts are made by engraving designs, patterns and portraits on wood. It can be printed after on a massive scale after applying colour. The popular single or double prints on picture-story books have the themes of the six gods of heaven, earth, kitchen, warehouse, wealth and horse. At Spring Festival woodcut prints are pasted in homes or on horse-drawn carts and other vehicles. This is how people invoke the gods to bless them with happiness and peace in the coming year.

TIANJIN CITY

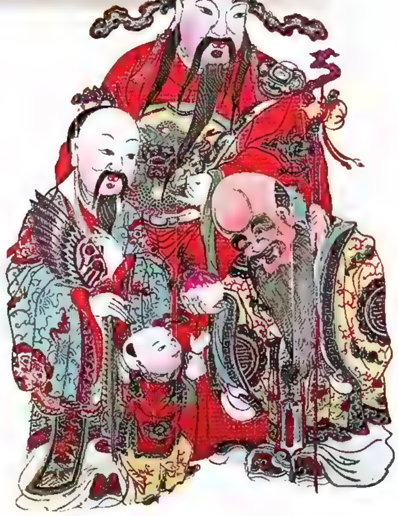
Yangliuqing is the centre of woodcut printing, which was first developed in northern China during the Ming Dynasty, and they reached their height in the Qing Dynasty. The woodcuts are coloured and the prints are also painted by hand. They usually depict good luck and good fortune symbols, legends and stories from stage plays with bustling and lively scenes. There is a rich delineation of characters. Colours are striking and conspicuous. Printing techniques later improved as the designs were traced in gold, adding to the richness of colour composition. These colours do not fade, and they are collected by connoisseurs in Europe and North America.





JIANGSU PROVINCE

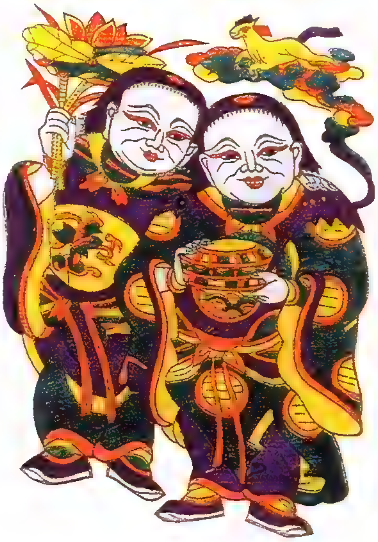
Taohuawu is a centre for woodblock printing and it enjoys a reputation similar to Yangliuqing in Tianjin. Its themes include deity totems, drama stories, good luck themes on celebration days and local customs. There are pictures of women, children, flowers, animals, current events and decorative designs. The printed woodcuts spread to Southeast Asia and Japan, exerting a profound influence on Ukiyoe, the Japanese school of paintings depicting scenes from everyday life.



SHANDONG PROVINCE

Woodcut prints of Shandong Province show broad vistas paintings by hand in light colours. The themes cover good fortune and the exorcising evil spirits, local customs, stories from history, legends, novels, theatrical plays, current events, comic episodes and the like. Rather exaggerated in style, they reflect life in rural China.

Yangjiabu is 15 km northeast of Weifang city. Trains from Qingdao and Jinan run to Weifang. Flights are available from Beijing and Shanghai to the city.



HENAN PROVINCE

Prominent colours are made with dyes from Chinese herbs, and green, yellow and red are the most common of the ten colours used. The scenes are simple but exaggerated, taken from historical stories, romances, novels, legends, myths and especially heroes. The lines are bold and the compositions rich in rural imagery. The Moscow Museum holds 118 works, mostly from the Qing Dynasty during the reign of Emperor Qian Long.

From Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan, trains and buses run to Kaifeng City. Zhuxianzhen is 23 km from Kaifeng and can be reached by taxi.

MASK

In ancient China masks were known as qi (fortune and luck), xiang (imitation) and qitou (devil's head). Masks were first used at funerals, ceremonies to ward off evil spirits and primitive dances for good fortune. Now they are common throughout China in deity dances, Nuo dances to ward off plagues and devils, communal dances and in theatrical plays and operas. Masks are made of wood, bark, coconut shells or gourds, held by the mouth or hand.

Nuo Dances of Guizhou Province

"Nuo" was performed in ancient times during the last month of the lunar calendar to ward off disease and demons and it is now the oldest surviving dance form in China. The drama is still widely performed in many forms today. The masks are colourfully painted wood, ceramics or coconut shell. The wood used is either willow tree or white poplar, because the willow is regarded as having properties that ward off evil and bring good fortune, whereas white poplar is light and does not crack easily. Mask making is a complicated process, stressing the correct proportions of different colours. The picture composition is realistic, and the masks have different names that represent the different status of performers.

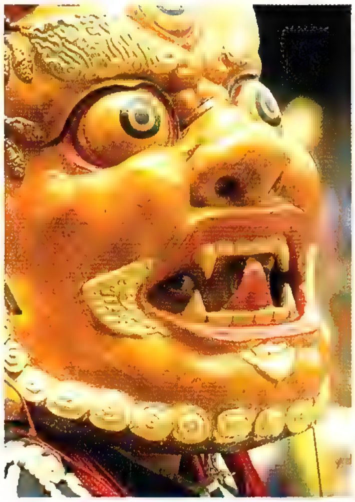
Tunbao dixi of Guizhou Province

Dixi refers to plays performed in fields with no stage platform. It originated from Jun Nuo or military Nuo Drama for the purpose of boosting troops' morale, and it is performed by men only. The mask is carved from clove or white poplar wood. It is regarded as a deity, and collected by prestigious and prominent personalities. Dixi depicts romances, novels and Qu Yi (ballad singing, story telling, comic dialogue and cross talks). There are 370 variations of Dixi in Anshun Tunbao, which are performed on Chinese Spring Festival or at the ripening of rice and grain to pray for good fortune, as well as to ward off ghosts and demons. Dixi is still performed today in Tian Long Tunbao, where is close to Guiyang, the provincial capital of Guizhou.

Tibetan drama

In places like Tibet, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan, Tibetan masks are extensively used in religious worship and folk dances. There are two kinds: Tiaoshen (worn by a female wizard) and Hanging Masks. Tiaoshen masks are worn in deity dances during religious festivals. The picture composition of this mask is unique and brightly coloured.

Tiaoshen Deity Dances on religious festivals, such as Xuedun (the first day of seventh month of the Tibetan calendar), can be seen in August as Drepung Temple, western Lhasa, and at Tar Monastery, Xining, Qinghai Province, in July.



EMBROIDERY

Embroidery is an exquisite craft. Embroidered designs on sacrificial robes once represented the social status of the wearers. Later it developed into an ornamental art used on clothes, bedclothes, mosquito nets or screen panels. The designs are painted directly on cloth or silk, which the embroiderer then stitches in. Sometimes it features Chinese writings. Embroidery can be in single or multiple bright colours.

GUIZHOU PROVINCE

Miao Embroidery is made of yarn or silk. Styles known as Pingxiu (xiu means embroider in Chinese), Panxiu, Bianxiu, Zhouxiu and Zhihua produce magnificent pictures and patterns. They decorate cuffs, sleeves, shoulders and skirt hems. Miao men and women, young and old, all decorate their clothes with needlework. The techniques are varied, and known as Xiu, Cha, Kao, Kun and Sa. Red, yellow, green and white are the preferred colours, whereas green and black, regarded as cold colours, are seldom used. Totem art is a tradition of the Miao and their embroidery is primitive in style. Realism is not emphasized, nor is clarity, but changes in form are stressed instead. Miao embroidery is common in western Hunan Province, southern Sichuan Province and northeastern Guangxi Province, as well as Guizhou Province.

Miao embroidery can be seen in places such as Kaili, Huangping and Rongjiang, which can be reached by scheduled long-distance buses from Quiyang, capital of Guizhou Province.

GUANGDONG PROVINCE

The noted Guangdong's Chaozhou embroidery is delicate and high-class. Pearl embroidery has been used in haute couture in recent years. It uses round pearls as decoration combined with the traditional prominent colours and raised surfaces to make it more vivid.

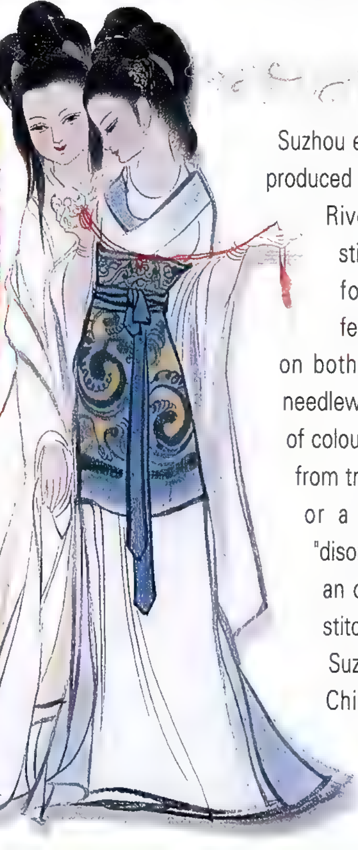
HUNAN PROVINCE

Hunan embroidery has very complicated needlework, comprising Cenzhen, Wacenzhen, Zhicenzhen, Paicenzhen, Maozhen, Qiangmaozhen, Jimaozhen, Youzhen, Hunzhen, Dazizhen and other styles. The pictures are in realistic soft colours. Traditional themes include flowers, birds and scenic beauty. Lotus, plum and pine trees, bamboo and chrysanthemum are added later.

SHANXI PROVINCE

Shanxi's embroidery usually appears on bags, aprons, pillows, pot covers and sheets of silk presented as birthday gifts. The themes are mainly characters from the local Pu Opera*. Each piece of embroidery is full of wit and activity. Some images are even portrayed with greater ingenuity than the original opera.

* Pu Opera is originated in southern Shanxi and is divided into two schools: Nanlu (southern) and Xilu (western). The former features legendary stories with love as the central theme, while the latter focuses on the music, with exciting and passionate melodies.



JIANGSU PROVINCE

Suzhou embroidery is a representative of the style produced south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. It is characterized by sophisticated stitching and techniques. The area is famous for its double-sided embroidery, which features different images in different colours on both sides of the fabric, involving a dozen needlework techniques and several hundred types of coloured thread. The images are usually copied from traditional Chinese paintings, an oil painting or a photograph. One technique, called "disordered needling", can produce the effect of an oil or watercolor painting with crisscross stitches.

Suzhou embroidery works are displayed in the China Suzhou Embroidery Art Museum at Huanxiu Mountain Villa, Suzhou.

WOOD CARVING

Woodcarving is a folk art employed to decorate wooden furniture or structures in a house. The raw material is quality timber. The styles are known as circular, shallow, fretwork, pierced, relief and thread carving. The craftsmanship was perfected during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties.

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

Dongyang woodcarving, also called whitewood carving, was used to decorate palaces, temples and balconies in ancient times. Some of the famous works are the carved wood decorations in the Forbidden City, in Beijing, and the Statue of Tathagata (Buddha) in Lingyin Temple, in Hangzhou. In the Qing Dynasty, Dongyang woodcarving became popular among the people in the form of screens, wall hangings, cases and lamp stands.

Most of the functional Dongyang woods carving products are painted brown or black to hide the crude craftsmanship. The medium-graded products like tables and chests are painted chestnut brown, red brown and yellow brown to allow appreciation of the wood grain and craftsmanship. Screens, lamp stands and other high-grade products are just varnished, keeping the original colour of the whitewood to fully display the skills of the artisans. Dongyang has a great variety of subjects ranging from characters of classic literature, folk tales and legends, to landscapes, flowers and birds.

Dongyang City Qinfeng Wood Carving Furniture Plant is located at 56 Xingping Zhonglu, Dongyang City. Other wood carving plants can be found in Dongyang.

GUANGDONG PROVINCE

Chaozhou wood carving uses camphor as the raw material and is applied in architecture, furniture, screens, shrines for idols and mail racks.

Chaozhou woodcarving is characterized by its fine detail. The textures of fabrics, eyebrows, hair and temples are all visible. Spatial context is also important; for instance, sometimes a pavilion is engraved on different levels for a strong three-dimensional effect. The subjects include animals like the dragon, lion and phoenix; plants like plum and bamboo; and insects like the cicada and butterfly.

JIANGXI PROVINCE

Yujiang woodcarvings have three categories: daily use, religious use and decoration. The most common items are engraved camphor boxes, small jewelry cases, scrolls and Buddhist shrines. Wuyuan is home to many of such architectural works.

Wood carving works are displayed at Jiangxi Arts and Crafts Museum, 23 East Beijing Road, Nanchang City, Jiangxi Province.

ANHUI PROVINCE

In Huizhou, woodcarving is mainly used on buildings and furniture. Its craftsmanship includes coloured circular and plain circular carving, fretwork, engraved work, deep and shallow relief and linear carving.

Homes in the villages of ancient Huizhou, including Xidi and Hongcun, are decorated with many carvings. These villages can be reached by shuttle buses from the county town of Yixian.

CERAMIC

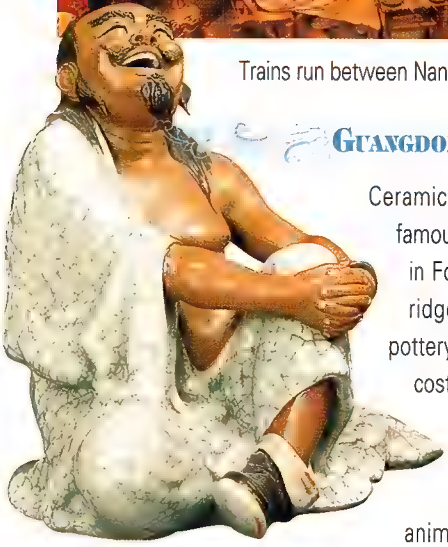
Ceramics are made by firing clay bases. Pottery is generally coarse in texture and without lustre, while porcelain is smoother and usually glazed to give it lustre. Pottery and porcelain are used mainly to make household utensils such as flowerpots, tea sets, tableware and drinking utensils. They are also used to make religious idols or Buddha statues and handcrafts.

JIANGXI PROVINCE

The chinaware produced in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, is noted for its traditional style: white, thin and bright. Porcelain-makers in Jingdezhen have in recent times developed new styles. In particular delicate "fencai" (light-colour glazed) porcelain, elegant blue and white porcelain, Linglong porcelain and eggshell porcelain have become very popular. The multi-coloured glazed porcelain fired at a temperature of more than a thousand degrees centigrade, are very valuable and are often used as diplomatic gifts.

Jingdezhen can be reached from any direction, Jiujiang, Nanchang or Huangshan. Trains run between Nanchang and Jingdezhen and between Huangshan and Jingdezhen, while buses run from Jiujiang.

GUANGDONG PROVINCE



Ceramics produced in Shiwan are very famous. If you visit an ancestral temple in Foshan, you'll find that the eaves, ridges and walls are covered with pottery and porcelain figures in ancient costumes. Shiwan has a wide variety of decorative ceramics, which can be classified into four categories: human characters, animals, landscapes and household utensils. The pottery characters, animals and pavilions used to decorate pottery landscapes can be as small as a peanut or a grain of rice.

There are special minibuses run to Shiwan Town from Foshan.

SHANDONG PROVINCE

The decorative ceramics from Zibo, Shandong, are well known in northern China for their exquisite craftsmanship and rich variety. There are lifelike carved porcelain figures, Lifen coloured pottery, and reproduction of ancient pottery and porcelain. Zibo ceramics also have distinctive glazes such as the "heaven's eyes glaze", a black glazed surface dotted with small silver spots. Another glazing, which blends yellow and green dots, is usually used on stationery utensils, bottles and jars. Such products, of primitive simplicity and elegance, are sought after by collectors.

Located between Qingdao and Jinan, Zibo is closer to Jinan, taking one hour on the express highway. Zibo Artistic Ceramics Factory is in downtown Zibo.

YIXING OF JIANGSU PROVINCE

Yixing has the reputation as a "pottery capital"; its products include boccaro ware, Jun pottery, celadon ware and refined pottery. The boccaro ware has won gold prizes at world fairs in Paris, Panama and Chicago. Tea made in a boccaro pot retains its original flavor, and tealeaves stored in a boccaro pot do not change in color or decay. The longer the pot is used, the more lustrous it becomes, and the more fragrant the tea is.

Yixing is only half an hour by bus from Wuxi. Most pottery factories are in Dingshu Town. Almost all local families make boccaro pots.

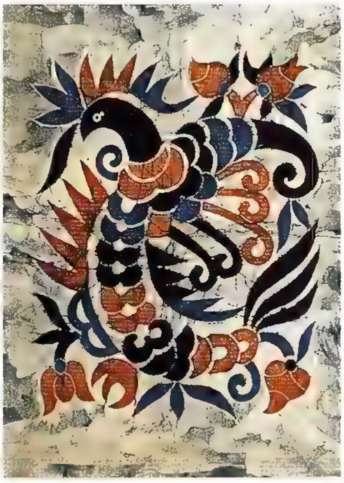
LONGQUAN OF ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

Celadon ware produced in Longquan County of Zhejiang Province is the most ancient of China's painted porcelain forms. Longquan celadon ware looks simple and lively with light, elegant glazes.

Located in the southern mountainous region of Zhejiang Province, Longquan County is closer to Wenzhou. To get to Longquan County seat, take a bus or train from Wenzhou to Lishui, and then a special bus to Longquan.

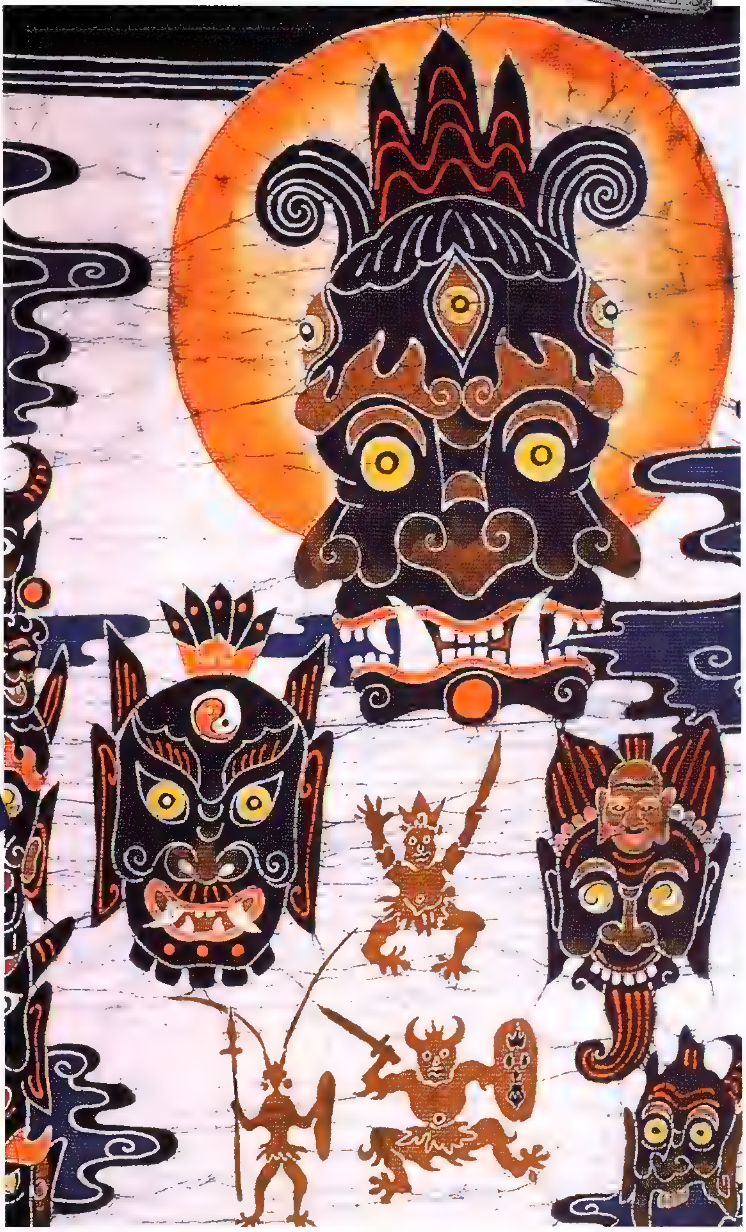
BATIK

Wax printing (batik) is a traditional art form using insect or paraffin wax, rosin or gum to sketch designs on fabric before the fabric is dyed and boiled in water to reveal the desired patterns and designs. Wax printing is very common among the ethnic minority people in southwest China, especially among the Miao, Shui and Yi people in Guizhou Province.

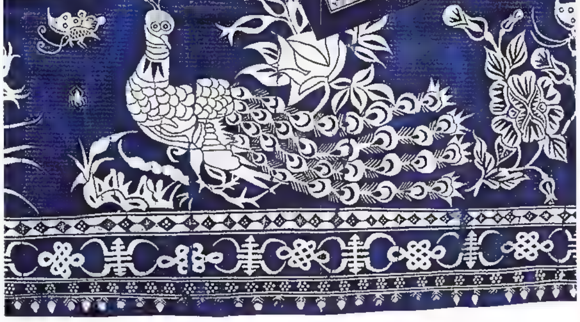


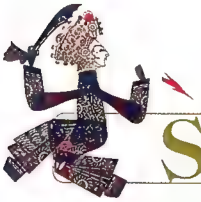
Batik originated 2,000 years ago during the Han Dynasty. The costumes of the characters in the Thousand-Buddha Cave in the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes bear testimony to the technique. Today 80 percent of the cities and counties in Guizhou produce batik articles. Anshun is recognized as the center of Chinese wax printing. The Palace Museum in Beijing has a collection of Guizhou batiks from the 11th to the 17th Centuries.

The minority people living deep in the mountains often use nature as the subjects of batik images: mountain dwellers use flowers, birds, insects and butterflies, while the people living by rivers prefer fish, shrimps and egrets. In terms of painting techniques, they strive for exaggerated images or outlines. In addition to traditional blue and white, artists also adopt multi-colour processing, dyeing in red, green, blue and yellow.



Dongba batik is made with cotton cloth, silk and golden velvet, using a specially made knife dipped in melted wax. The process is begun using a knife dipped in melted wax to paint patterns and designs on white cloth, which is then soaked in an indigo vat (mainly blue), then boiled in water to remove the wax. The traditional wax printing follows six steps: cleaning, drafting, applying wax, dyeing, wax removing and rinsing. The common batik cloth often has irregular net-like lines called "ice veins". This is caused by brittle beeswax that cracks after solidifying, allowing blue indigo dye to seep into the cracks, leaving the lines. One pattern can have many different ice veins.



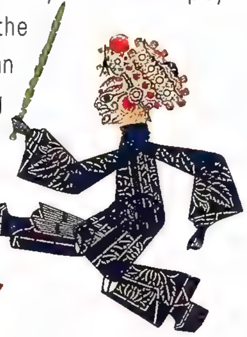


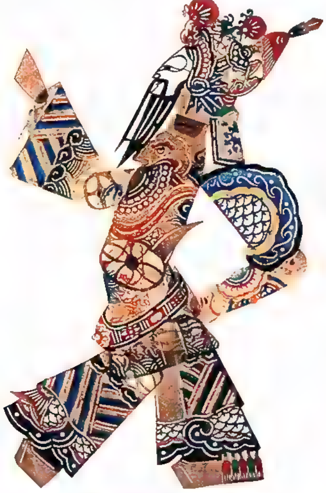
SHADOW PLAY (PIYING)

Shadow play is a drama played out with silhouette puppets made of donkey, sheep or cattle hide that are projected onto a white silk screen. The performer manipulates the characters with rods behind the screen while singing a libretto to tell the story. Shadow play is very popular in Liaoning, Shanxi, Shaanxi and Hebei Provinces.

LIAONING PROVINCE

Eastern Liaoning shadow play is represented by Xiuyan Manchu Autonomous County. The shadow play developed here combines the styles of the Manchu and Han people. Eastern Liaoning shadow play has a large repertoire. The Manchu language and local dialects are widely used.

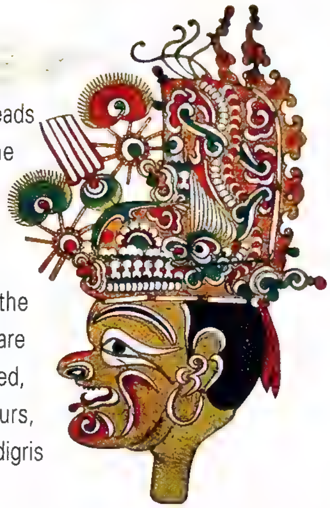




SHAANXI PROVINCE

In Shaanxi, the puppet images usually have large heads and exaggerated eyebrows and eyes to highlight the characters. The mouths are engraved according to different roles; the male characters usually have closed lips and the females open mouths. The designs on the costumes of puppets are created in accordance with the themes of the drama, and the patterns of painted cloth are popular among ordinary people and stage costumes. Red, yellow, green, black and white are the dominant colours, whereas traditional dyes such as gamboges yellow, verdigris and pinkish red are considered the best.

China Xi'an Shadow Play Museum at 243 West Youyi Road, Xi'an, has a large collection of Shaanxi shadow items.



SHANXI PROVINCE

Shadow play in Shanxi Province is divided into two schools: Nanlu (southern) and Beilu (northern). The silhouettes of Nanlu's shadow play stand 33 cm tall and they are all uniquely decorated. The Beilu School is influenced by the western city school of shadow play in Beijing, which used to use paper screens before changing to gauze. Selection of the hide is important in the making of shadow puppets. Only the skins of young, healthy cattle are selected.

PUPPET PLAY

Puppet play refers to the performances of carved wooden figurines in the forms of marionettes, glove puppets and the "rod-top" puppets, which are manipulated using wooden sticks.

Marionettes are manipulated with strings on a specially made stage to the accompaniment of music. They are made in Quanzhou (Fujian Province) from camphor wood, which repels insects. The head of a marionette is carved and painted in three parts to give it a range of facial expressions. Such puppets usually have 16 to 24 strings, but they can have more than 30. Great attention is paid to the head ornaments, costumes and weapons. The quality of workmanship depends on the different roles.

Puppet plays used to be performed on a flat stage, but more complicated stages were developed later. The puppet images change with different shows and sometimes one role is operated by a combination of string, hand and stick. The number of marionette operators increased from one to two to enrich the detail of the performance.

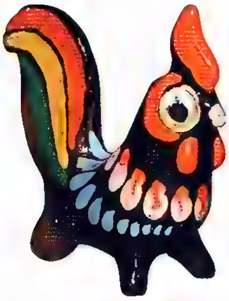
The glove puppet show draws its inspiration from opera, dance and acrobatics. Artisans of superb skills often perform difficult movements such as shooting arrows on horseback. As only very simple props are required, these shows can be staged anywhere anytime.

CLAY SCULPTURE

Clay sculpture is made by first mixing some fabric into clay, then shaped into various figurines and finally completed with colouring.

SHAANXI PROVINCE

Fengxiang clay sculpture has absorbed the patterns of ancient stone carvings, New Year pictures, paper cuts and embroidery. The earliest known clay idols were painted mainly red, green and black. The production of a clay sculpture from molding to colouring goes through an eight-step process. The products include toys, garden sculptures and drama characters. Local people traditionally give clay sculptures as gifts. For instance, when a baby is one month old, he will receive clay tigers.



GUIZHOU PROVINCE

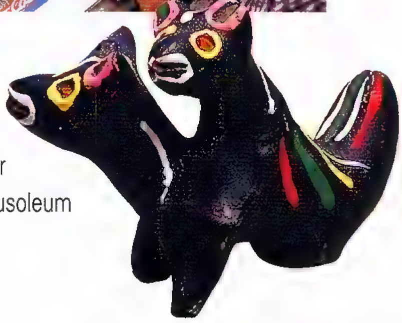
Clay whistles are produced by Miao people in Huangping, Guizhou Province. Such whistles can be as big as a fist and as small as a plum, and shaped like different animals. The figurines are first decorated, then dried in the shade before firing in a kiln for a day. Then these clay whistles become hard and dark and are painted in red, white, yellow, green, blue or purple. Finally they are glazed with egg white.

JIANGSU PROVINCE

Huishan clay figurines are produced in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province. They are made from the magnetic clay. The soil in Huishan has a fine texture and is very pliable. Originally, Huishan clay figurines were big-headed children and small animals. Later they are developed as Guanyin (Bodhisattva) and the god of longevity.

A visit to the Huishan Clay Figurines Museum in Wuxi City is recommended.

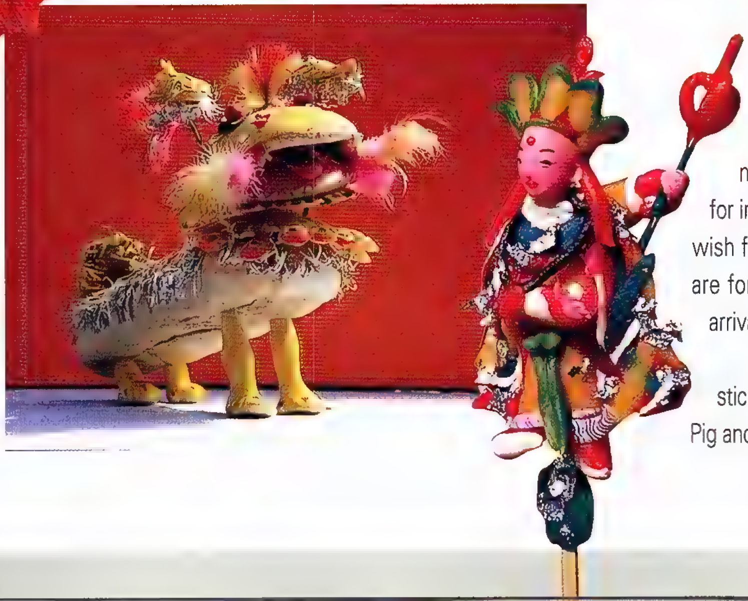
HENAN PROVINCE



Northern Huaiyang is the location of Taihao Mausoleum, the ancestral temple for worshipping Fuxi (a legendary Chinese ruler who taught people how to fish, hunt and raise livestock) and Nuwa (the goddess who created humans and patched up the sky). Nini Dog, a well-known local clay sculpture, is the general term for Huaiyang clay sculpture and is also called a tomb watchdog. It is said to be a supernatural dog guarding the mausoleum of Fuxi and Nuwa. It is usually painted mainly with a black background with colorful patterns on it.

DOUGH MODELLING

Dough modelling uses flour to create models of tigers, lions, fish, flowers, fruit, children and opera characters. It is not only a craft, but also a culinary style common during festivals.



Dough modelling originated as sacrificial offerings to gods or ancestors. As poor peasants could not afford cattle and sheep tributes, they made dough products. But later, dough models became gifts for relatives and friends on festival occasions; for instance, lotus- or carp-shaped cakes are given at Spring Festival to wish friends a good new year, and mandarin ducks and pomegranates are for weddings to wish the newlyweds happiness and the speedy arrival of a son.

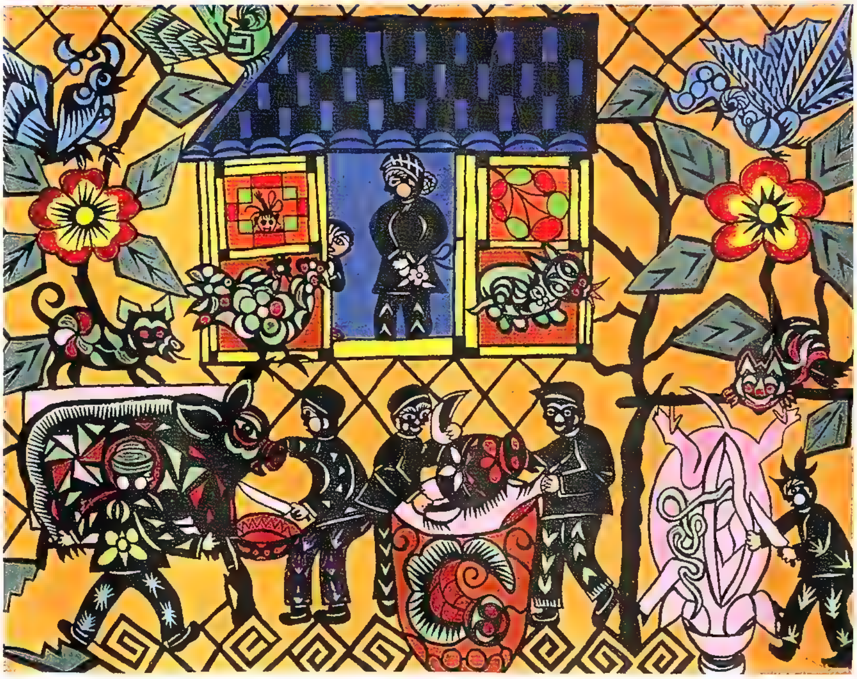
The artisans in Shandong and Fujian also make dough figurines on sticks, such as the characters in "Journey to the West": Monk, Monkey, Pig and Sandi (a fish spirit), which are favourites among children.

PEASANT PAINTING

Peasant paintings cover such themes as pictures for doors, statues of gods or auspicious pictures painted on walls and at the end of eaves. These paintings have various distinctive local styles. Such paintings are available in Huxian and Ansai of Shaanxi Province, Pixian and Liuhe of Jiangsu Province and Jinshan of Shanghai.

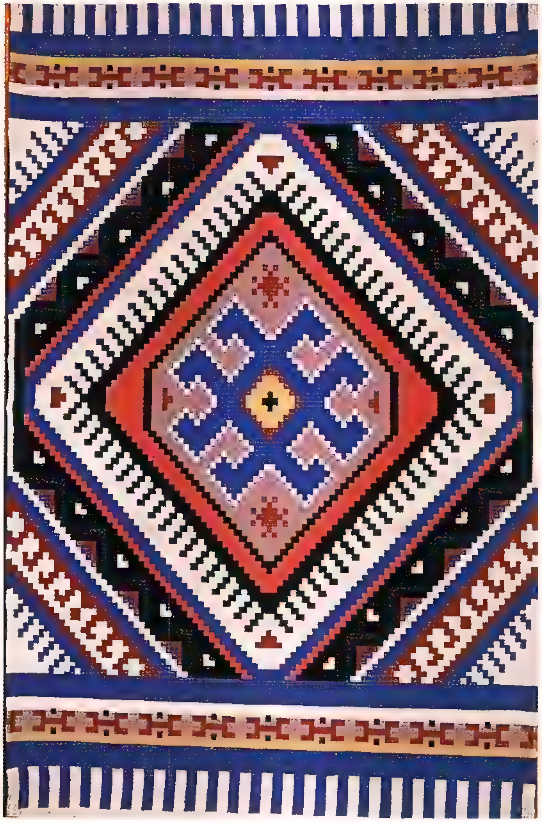
Huxian County, Shaanxi, is known as the centre of peasant painting. The walls of peasants' houses are covered with colourful pictures. Local peasant painters are good at depicting aspects of their environment with vivid images, such as scenes of farming, celebrations and spinning. Other characteristics of peasant painting are its rural themes, simple style and rich colours. The artisans from Huxian are skilled at using patterns and structures of a picture to express ideas.

The peasant painters of Tonggu village, in Majiang, Guizhou Province depict the lives of their people and pay tribute nature and their hometowns. They base their work on daily life with subjects covering herding cattle, fishing and cutting firewood.



BROCADE

Brocade is a kind of silk fabric with multicoloured patterns. Although it is very difficult to weave, the ethnic minority people of China have used simple tools to turn out magnificent brocades. These people are from the ethnic groups of Zhuang, Miao, Li, Dai, Dong, Yao and Tujia.



Tujia brocade is mainly produced in Xiangxi Tujia Autonomous Prefecture and Exi Tujia Autonomous Prefecture. The products of Longshan, Huayuan and Yongshun counties are well known. They are brightly coloured with simple patterns. Tujia brocade is made by family loom and is no more than 66 cm wide. The main materials are cotton thread, knitting wool or silk. Each piece is different in designs. Birds, animals, fish, insects, plants and flowers are the main themes. Single width Tujia brocade can be used to make garments, towels for pillows, aprons, table pads, teacup mats and bridal headscarves.

Dai brocade from Yunnan and Sichuan Provinces is a folk art of the Dai people. The patterns on the brocade are usually diamond-shaped, and the principle colors are red, green, yellow, black, blue and white.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE NO. 284

Feature Story:

Ascending to Fairyland – Mt. Taihang

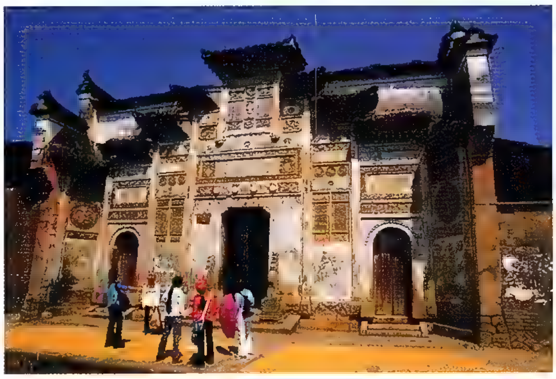
Mt. Taihang captures the essence and beauty of northern China. It has grotesque peaks that thrust themselves toward the sky, dramatic waterfalls that rush down cliffs into the forest that blankets deep valleys, and precipitous cliffs interlinked with green terraces. And what's more, its grand canyon is loaded up with rocks of different geologic periods, and such unique stone residence draws flocks of geologists.

On the Way: Woodland Mini-trains

Growing up in the woodland of Heilongjiang Province, I had an inexplicable encounter with woodland mini-trains. When I was little, there was a narrow railway winding in front of my home. Every night when the mini-train passed our doorstep, the whole house would shake as if there was an earthquake. For many years, I have visited all the Forestry Bureau in Heilongjiang where there were mini-trains, shooting tens of thousands of pictures on mini-trains, and all the sweet and bitter experiences of life of railway workers.

Photography: In Pursuit of Jilin Rime

To the photography fans, there is nothing more spectacular in the North than the rime of Jilin City. Since the warm water of its main river never ices up even in the rigid winter, it creates a grand scene of steam due to the temperature difference. The rising vapor, when meeting with cold air, condenses into rime fog on tree twigs and bushes near the riverbank. Unfortunately, it becomes more and more difficult to find such ideal scenes of rime in the urban district, owing to global warming. Yet, I did bump into a perfect place with wonderful rime by chance.



Excursion: Old-fashioned Charm of Xiamei Village

Tucked away in the mountains, Xiamei village reminds me of the long-lost water town: mini-canal that runs through the village, farmers busy with harvesting, villagers hurrying along with bamboo baskets on their backs, children running gleefully across the tiny bridge, narrow rain shelters that lay on the riverbanks....

BITS AND PIECES OF SICHUAN

China's western hinterland, Sichuan Province, is surrounded by mountains and enjoys a mild climate. It covers a vast area of 485,000 km^2, accounting for about 5% of China's total area and providing a home to a population of 83 million.

Sichuan has more than 1,300 rivers, practically all in the Yangtze River system. Many of the rivers in Sichuan flow rapidly between hills, mountains and gorges, making it the number one province in hydroelectric power potentials.

Sichuan boasts a varied topography, from plateaus, mountain ranges and canyons to basins, hills and plains; from rivers and lakes to hot springs and waterfalls; and from volcanic landforms to rosy cloud-shaped hills. It has always enjoyed the reputation of "picturesque province". This is particularly true for western Sichuan, where you will find three of China's largest forest regions and one of five largest pastures. Furthermore, the lofty and precipitous peaks of northwestern Sichuan are home to 8590 of China's rare giant pandas, which are famed as a national treasure.

Known as a land of plenty, Sichuan has a long history and brilliant culture. The province includes seven cities recognized by the central government as state-level historical and cultural cities. These are Chengdu (provincial capital), Zigong, Leshan, Yibin, Luzhou, Langzhong, and Dujiangyan. In addition, there are 40 key state-level reserves of cultural relics and 24 provincial-level historical and cultural cities or towns. There are no shortage of ancient towns, Buddhist temples, Daoist shrines, forests of stone carvings, prehistoric ruins as well as modern art collection and state-of-the-art tourism facilities.

Sichuan is home to 15 ethnic minorities, including the Tibetan, Yi, Qiang, and Naxi. Their traditional festivals offer another window on Chinese culture, including the lantern festival, the flower festival, horse racing, the torch festival, mountain pilgrimages and many others. Not only the hospitality is legendary, Sichuan's native wines and cuisine are also famous throughout the country and around the world.

GETTING THERE

剑门蜀道风景区
明月峡
戊辰年孟春月立

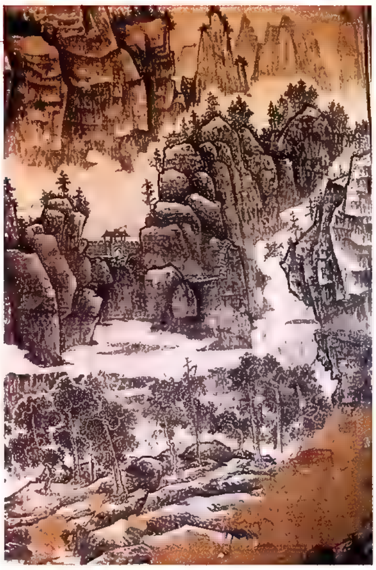
By Air: Chengdu is a transportation hub in of southwestern China. The Shuangliu International Airport, one of the seven largest airports in the country, is linked with other airports via 60 national flight routes, 5 international and regional routes and 12 charter routes. Major airlines such as British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, Lufthansa, Iberia, SAS, Air Canada, Cathay Pacific and Japan Airlines all have flights to Chengdu Airport (CTU) daily.

By Land: The Chengdu North Railway Station is in the centre of Jinniu District, northwestern of Chengdu. It is the sole special-grade station in southwestern China: Baoji-Chengdu, Chengdu-Chongqing, Chengdu-Kunming and Chengdu-Daxian lines meet here. The station handles 30 pairs of trains a day, including three pairs of excursion trains. The highways link every village. Some of the five expressways have been completed, and the others are under construction. They are from Changdu to Chongqing, Mianyang, Leshan, Nanchong and Ya'an.

ACCOMMODATION

Name	Star	Address	Telephone
Chengdu Hotel	★★★	No.1 Shudu Avenue East, Chengdu	028-84448888
Xinglongyang Hotel	★★★	No.25 Xinglong Street, Chengdu	028-86383388
Shudu Mansion Hotel	★★★	No.20 Shuwa 3rd Street, Chengdu	028-86753888
Sichuan Huayang Garden Hotel	★★★★	8 Daye Road, Chengdu	028-86663388
Yinhe Dynasty Hotel	★★★★	No.99 Xiaxi Shuncheng Street, Chengdu	028-86618888
Tianren Hotel	★★★★	No.18 Sandongqiao Road, Chengdu	028-87731111
Minshan Hotel	★★★★	No.55, Section 2,Ren Min Nan Ave, Chengdu	028-85583333
Green Land Hotel	★★★★★	No.99 Zhonglieci Weat Street, Chengdu	028-82938899
Sheraton Chengdu Lidu Hotel	★★★★★	No.15 Renmin Middle Road, Chengdu	028-86768999
Jinjiang Hotel	★★★★★	No.80 Renmin South Road, Chengdu	028-85582222
Holiday Inn Crown Plaza	★★★★★	No.31 Zong Fu Street, ChengDu	028-86786666

MAIN ATTRACTIONS



One of Sichuan's scenic resorts is its ancient route — Shudao. Located in northern Sichuan and some 117 km from its provincial capital Chengdu, this oldest route, which passes through Deyang, Mianyang and Guangyuan, was once the main national highway during the Three Kingdoms Period.

Numerous scenic resorts along the route offer visitors a glimpse of local customs and folklore. The main attractions are the Jianmen Pass, the Old Plank Road, Li Bai Memorial Hall, Sanxingdui and Douchui Mountain.

1. Jianmen Pass

A key pass along the old Shudao, Jianmen was known as an impregnable pass. The natural pass is formed by cliffs set among 72 steep peaks along a 100-kilometre stretch of mountains.

2. Old Plank Road

In ancient times, Sichuan and Shaanxi were linked by a plank road running between Mingyuexia Gorge to the south and Qingfeng Gorge to the north of Chaotian Town. It is about 25 km north of Guangyuan City and bordering on a cliff on the eastern bank of Jialing River. The road was first laid at the dawn of the Qin Dynasty (221—207 BC) and was renovated throughout the successive dynasties.

3. Li Bai Memorial Hall

Located in Jiangyou City, it is bordered by water on three sides and shaded by stands of bamboo and willow. One of the main buildings is the Taibai memorial Hall. The memorial hall is a depository for the treasured possessions of the famed poet Li Bai, as well as some Song Dynasty tablets, valuable carvings and a portrait of Li Bai.

4. Sanxingdui

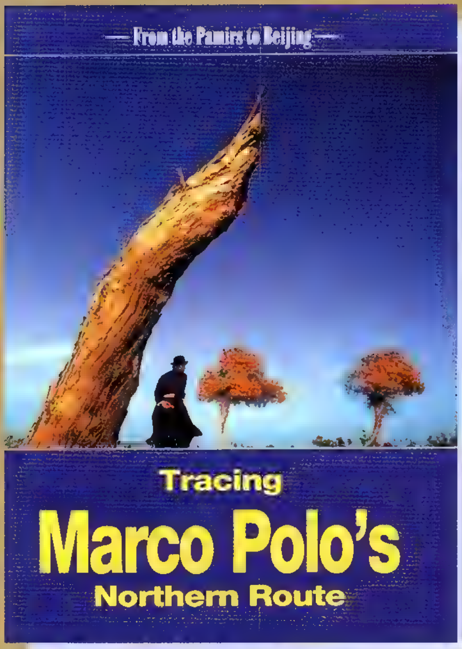
It was the capital of the Kingdom of Shu. The ruins of the once-grand city lie to the west of Guanghan City. In 1986, much of the 4,000 year-old ruins were excavated, and six state-level treasures were unearthed. The relics reflect the height of the Bronze Age in China. The Sanxingdui Museum was completed in 1997 and now displays over 1,000 cultural relics.

5. Douchui Mountain

It is located in the Wudu District, 15 km from Jiangyou City. Xiangyue, Feixian and Shenfu peaks rise about 100 m from the summit and are only 30 to 40 m from each other. When viewed from a distance, they form a majestic crown on the mountain's summit. Three holy sites were built on the peaks, Dongyue Shrine on Xiangyue, Douzhen Palace on Feixian and Luban Palace on Shenfu.

Photographic & Practical Guides for Your China Tours

Before you set off for your perfect journey, you may have to prepare your itinerary carefully. Each of the following recommended readings offers different types of information which cater to our readers' various interests: exploring, photography, or tourist information. They will be great guides to your China tours.


From the Pamirs to Beijing
Tracing
Marco Polo's
Northern Route

Tracing Marco Polo's Northern Route

A record of an 80-day journey in which our authors drive their jeep 12,000 km long through the northern regions of China following in the footsteps of Macro Polo's historic journey from the Pamir Highland to Beijing. In a medley of images and words, we present you with the fascinating scenery and various ways of life in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet.

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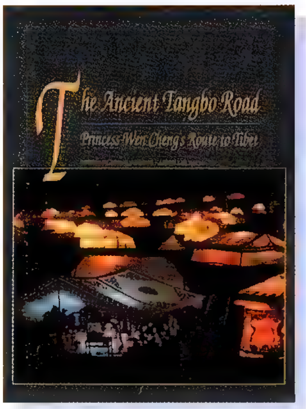

The Ancient Tangbo Road
Princess Wen Cheng's Route to Tibet

The Ancient Tangbo Road

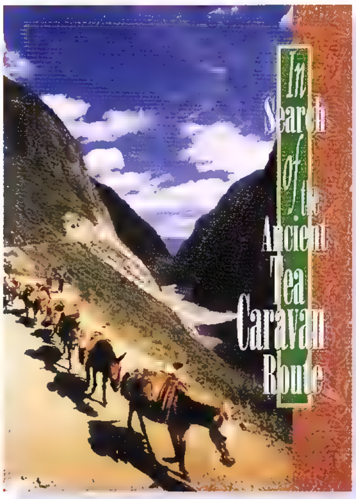
Covering four provinces including Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, and the Tibet Autonomous Region, the ancient Tangbo Road was created on the map when Princess Wen Cheng was sent as a bride to Luoxie (present-day Lhasa) during the Tang Dynasty. Our photographers and writers, who have followed this arduous route, present you the graceful sights and unique ethnic customs on the way.

HK$192

In Search of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

The ancient Tea Caravan Route can be traced back to 2,000 years ago, starting from Xishuangbanna at China's southwestern end, passing through boundless forests and valleys to the Sino-Indian, Nepalese and Sikkimese borders on Tibet, the "Roof of the World". This book is not-to-be-missed by every daring adventurer.

HK$192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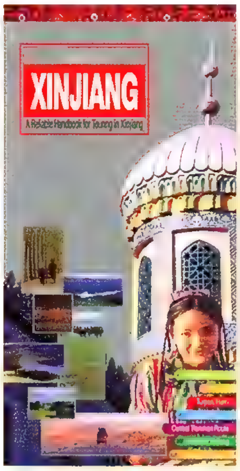
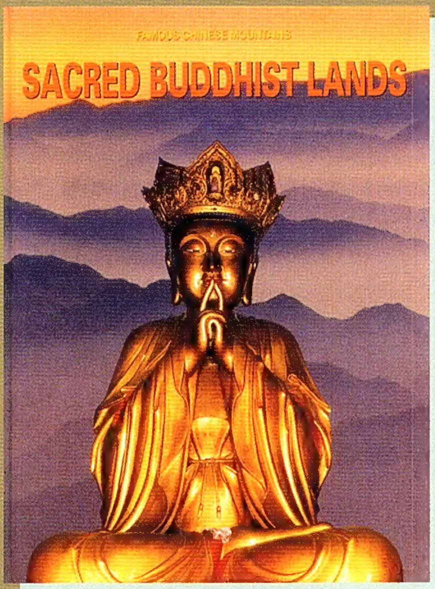

XINJIANG
A Reliable Handbook for Touring in Xinjiang

Guide to Xinjiang

This book is especially designated for DIY travellers who desire to explore the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. There are detailed introduction to scenic spots in five main areas in Xinjiang including Urümqi, Turpan, Southern and Northern Xinjiang, and Central Tianshan. Practical tourist information on accommodation, ticketing, shopping, local specialty, as well as travel tips are covered.

HK$96



Sacred Buddhist Lands

Buddhism in China is inevitably linked with some of the country's best known mountains. And going deep in the mountains and far away from civilization is an ideal place for retreat. Belonging to the four Bodhisattvas respectively, the four most famous Buddhist mountains — Wutai, Jiuhua, Putuo and Emei — are nestled with numerous monasteries and nunneries which have been worshipped by pilgrims for thousands of years. Tourists to these places will totally be soaked in "Kingdoms of Buddhism".

HK$156

The Five Sacred Mountains
The Yellow Mountain

Located in five provinces in China, every of the Five Sacred Mountains — Taishan, Hengshan, Songshan, Hengshan and Huashan — has its magnificent natural and cultural landscapes. Besides, Huangshan (Yellow Mountain), is also famous for its spectacular rocks, pine trees, and sea of clouds. It will be a great enjoyment in reading both the detailed text and remarkable images by our experienced photographers as recorded in this book.

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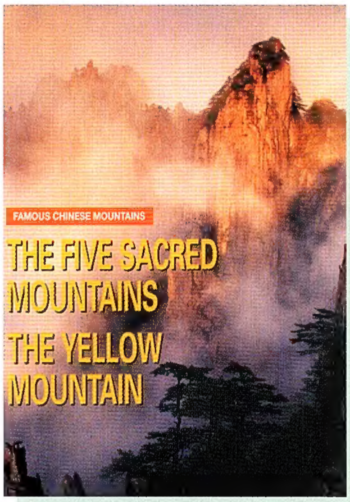

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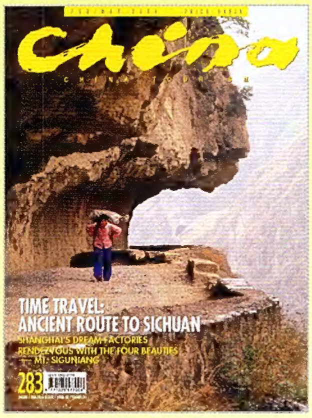
China
TIME TRAVEL: ANCIENT ROUTE TO SICHUAN
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Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Time Travel: The Ancient Route to Sichuan	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Yellow River – As Seen from the Sky	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Secret of Ancient Family Planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dream Factories	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A Close Encounter with Mt. Siguniang	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Others:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Articles	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Travel Tips	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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What are your suggestions for improvement?

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Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

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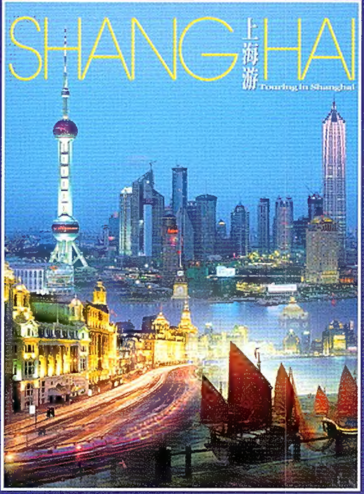
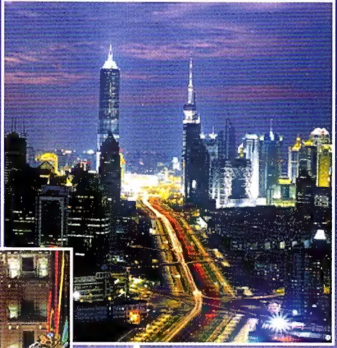


Shanghai has evolved at an unprecedented speed for decades into the biggest commercial city in China and one of the great metropolises of the world. Favourably located at the mouth of the Yangtse River, Shanghai has a long history and a rich culture. Commercial tower blocks and traditional buildings exude their individual charms simultaneously in the Pudong District, where hundreds of buildings in different styles, old or new, are collectively known as the Exposition of World Architecture. A kaleidoscope of entertainments and festivals of Old Shanghai attracts scores of entrepreneurs and travellers alike. "Touring in Shanghai" takes you deeper into this vibrant city through spectacular photography, along with outlines for more than 10 different kinds of tours including a shopping tour, popular tourist sights, cultural excursions, and more. Practical information summarises accommodations, transport and dining options, and tourist maps are also included. "Touring in Shanghai" is the latest, most comprehensive travel pictorial of Shanghai available in Hong Kong.



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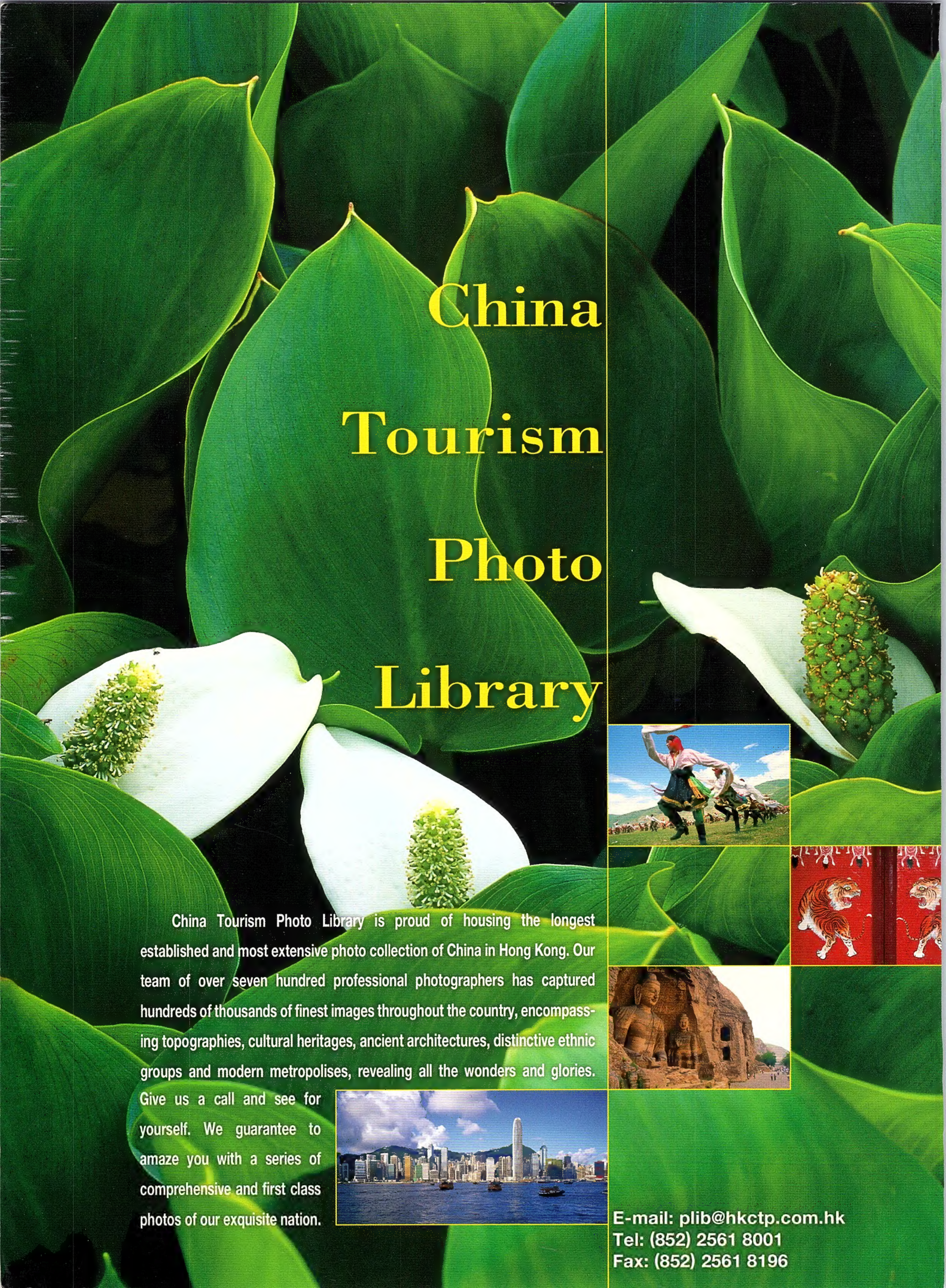

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